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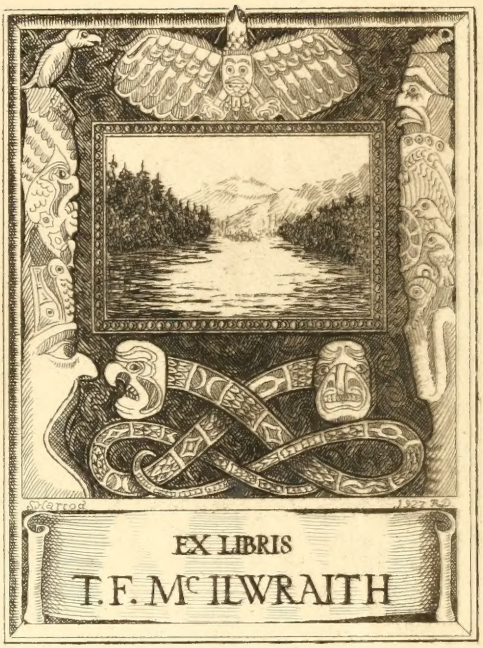
THE NATIVE RACES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

AUSTRALIA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NATIVES OF AUSTRALIA

The Native Races of the British Empire

NATIVES
OF
AUSTRALIA

BY

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WITH THIRTY-TWO FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
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PREFACE

SAVAGES, or, as they are better termed, peoples in the lower stages of culture, are studied by anthropological experts more and more closely every year, though in England and British possessions generally there is little money, public or private, available for expeditions, costly or otherwise; but the results of these researches appear in a form at once too technical and too bulky to attract the ordinary reader, who wishes to learn something of the life of these children of nature. In the British Isles, where there are few families but send some member into our dependencies as Government official, soldier, or colonist, interest in the subject races of the empire should be especially keen; the present series is intended to supply, in handy and readable form, the needs of those who desire to learn something of the life of these races, who, even if they are less civilised than ourselves, are perhaps not less worthy of study than beetles and jellyfish.

The contributors to the series will, as a rule, be personally acquainted with the peoples of whom they treat; in other cases, the present work included, no statement will be made for which good authority cannot be cited, though, in the interest of the general reader, the text will be unencumbered with footnotes. There is in preparation a bibliography of the literature relating to the aborigines of Australia; from this it

will be possible to verify all the statements in the present volume.

I am indebted to my friend Mr. Norman Hardy's artistic and anthropological skill for the sketches reproduced in Plates XV. and XVII. Dr. R. H. Marten, of Adelaide, was good enough to obtain from Mr. P. E. Cowle a number of photographs taken by Mr. F. R. Scott, of which ten are reproduced in this volume. I owe to Captain Bradshaw the photograph for Plate X., and to Dr. Haddon the loan of Blandowski's rare work for Plate XXVIII. I am indebted to the Council of the Moravian Missions for the loan of the blocks for Plates IV., V., VI., XIII., and XIV.; and to the Council of the Anthropological Institute, for Plates VII., VIII., XIX., XXIV., XXV., and XXXII.

Dr. Seligmann has been good enough to communicate to me the result of some inquiries into gesture-language in North Queensland, made for him by Captain Pim; I have learnt much from Mrs. Stow (Mrs. Langloh Parker); and Madame Bird's reminiscences have also been put at my disposal. My heartiest thanks are due to all the ladies and gentlemen named here, and to others who have promised information, which I hope to utilise in a general work on the aborigines, now in preparation. I shall be glad to send a list of questions to any one who will either supply me with information on special points, or send photographs, with brief descriptions.

NORTHCOTE W. THOMAS.

August 24, 1906.

NATIVES OF AUSTRALIA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Geographical: area, ocean depths, mountains, river system, rainfall, temperature. Flora: woodlands, pastures, scrub, spinifex. Fauna: marsupials, birds, reptiles, insects. The dingo. Antiquity of man: Warnambool footprints, age of man in New South Wales and Victoria. Tasmanians and Australians. Origin of Australians: Negrito and Dravidian elements, Papuan influence. Early theories. Culture of Australia.

AUSTRALIA has been described as the largest island and the smallest continent on the globe, but in its general character it conforms to the continental model. If this is true from a geographical point of view, it is still more true from the standpoint of anthropology, zoology, and botany, as will be made clear in the sections devoted to these subjects. Although its shape is irregular, the coast is broken by few important inlets; in the south is the great sweep of the Australian Bight, and corresponding to it the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north-east. But, with these exceptions, the breaks in the regular curves of the coast are small. The area of Australia is rather less than 3,000,000 square miles—that is, some 20 per cent. less than that of Europe; but whereas the length of the European coasts is estimated at from 19 to 48,000 miles,

excluding the islands and the Asiatic frontier, that of Australia is no more than 9000 miles in length.

On the west Australia has no near neighbours; on the south the island of Tasmania or Van Diemen's Land, as it was formerly called, was ages ago part of the Australian continent, falling as it does within the 100-fathom line. Bass's Strait is 150 miles in breadth; but it is bridged by islands north of Cape Portland; the greatest distance is from Wilson's Promontory to Kent's Group—about 50 miles.

South-east lie the New Zealand islands at a distance of 1000 miles; and the next inhabited island, prior to the European invasion—New Caledonia—was nearly 1000 miles north of them, at a distance of 800 miles from the east coast of Australia. Outside this island stretches a chain including the New Hebrides, Santa Cruz, the Solomon Islands, and Bismarck Archipelago, right up to the east coast of New Guinea. New Guinea is separated from Australia by Torres Straits, likewise bridged by islands. It is 90 miles in width, and so shallow that a depth of 60 feet is only occasionally exceeded. There is reason to believe that land communication existed between New Guinea and Australia in comparatively recent times, and the evidence for this does not rest on the character of Torres Straits only. Stretching along the north-east coast of Australia for 1200 miles, with but one safe opening for ships, is the Great Barrier Reef. This strongly suggests a former shore-line, and Dr. Jack points out that the bays and estuaries on the same portion of the coast indicate a submerged valley.

In the north-west of Australia we have the Sunda Islands, the nearest being Timor, distant about 300 miles; but here the continental shelf, which, as we have seen, connects Australia with Tasmania and New Guinea, extends little more than half-way, and the channel is over 1000 fathoms deep on the shortest line, and over 200 fathoms deep at all points between Australia and Timor.

Following the rule that the highest mountains are found on the side of a continent bounded by the deepest ocean, the greatest elevations in Australia are on the east. Starting with the Australian Alps, forming the continuation of the Dividing Range of Victoria, we have an almost unbroken series of uplands running northwards, at no great distance from the sea; the height seldom falls below 2000 feet, and Mt. Kosciusko and other summits attain 5000 to 7000 feet. More compact is the central tableland round Macdonnell Range with a continuation towards North-West Cape. North of Adelaide and south of Perth are found two other upland areas; but with these exceptions and a broken chain from Selwyn Range north-west to Mt. Cockburn, the surface is, as a rule, less than 2000 feet above the sea.

Along the north-west coast, round the Gulf of Carpentaria, and over a great part of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, the land lies lower than 500 feet above the sea; Lake Eyre, in fact, the north-west end of the so-called Central Plain, is but 70 feet above the sea, though it lies nearly 250 miles from the nearest point of the coast. The channel of the Murray

is even lower. At Morgan, 400 miles from the sea, the elevation varies from 3 to 10 feet, according to the season; and from Swan Hill to the mouth, about 950 miles, the fall is little over 200 feet. The evidence of subsidence afforded by the soundings between Tasmania on the one hand and New Guinea on the other, and confirmed by the facts as to the Barrier Reef, is further supported by the investigations of the Victorian Department of Mines in the Murray valley. It has been shown by Dr. Howitt that the old Murray channel, discovered by boring, could not have discharged water into the sea, unless the land were at least 270 feet higher than it is at present.

The river system of Australia is in many ways peculiar. There are three important watersheds: one is at the south end of the Gulf, another east and south-east of the central tableland, and the third is the Riverina, drained by the Murray-Darling. But the term 'drained by' is almost a misnomer. In Europe from 20 to 50 per cent. of the rainfall flows away in rivers; whereas in the Darling at Bourke less than 10 per cent. of the rainfall of its catchment area is collected; not only so, but from Bourke to the sea, a distance of 550 miles in a direct line, the river gives up water rather than receives it. After heavy rain, however, the great plains are flooded, so much so that Oxley, in 1817, believed himself to be on the shores of a great inland sea. The flood water, however, sinks into the ground in a few hours in many cases, and, unlike other continents, the soil of Australia does not give back in the form of springs the moisture thus absorbed. If the rivers of

Landscape, Central Australia (p. 4)

the south-east are uncertain in their flow, this is still more the case with the streams which at times flow into Lake Eyre. Many of them disappear in the sand, though their beds bulk largely on the map. The result of this is, that one explorer describes the country as a barren desert; while another, visiting it at flood-time, sees nothing but marsh land; and a third, coming soon after him, finds a fertile plain. Floods are not, however, confined to the Riverina and centre; the rainfall of Australia is greatest on the east coast, reaching 50 inches at Sydney, as against 14 inches at Wentworth, nearly 500 miles inland. But the east coast in the early part of the last century was visited by droughts, varied by extraordinary floods, the Hawkesbury rising 93 feet above its usual level at some points. In 1867 the town of Richmond was nearly submerged by a rise of 60 feet. The effect of these extraordinary changes on fauna and flora, and indirectly on humanity, may be imagined.

As regards climate, the temperature at Melbourne in the south ranges from 30° to 100° in the shade, with a mean of 58°, but the hot wind from the interior sends the thermometer up to an extraordinary height at times, over 127° in the shade having been recorded; this is sometimes followed by an equally rapid fall, the temperature dropping 60° or 70° in a few hours.

The vegetation of Australia is for the most part singularly sombre and uniform in tone; an exception to this is the flora of the coastal portion of Cape York Peninsula, which contains many elements of Papuan origin, immigrants through Torres Straits. The

vegetation of the Australian woodlands is luxuriant, if monotonous; foremost among forest trees is the eucalyptus, which often attains a height of 250 and sometimes exceeds 400 feet. The various species of acacia with their yellow blossoms add to the beauty of the spring landscape, and the grass-tree (Xanthorrhæa) is a peculiar feature. But we miss the varied tints of the European landscape, for upper and under side of the leaves are alike in hue. There are, however, conspicuous exceptions in the sheltered valleys of New South Wales, where, as at Illawarra, the flame-tree makes the mountain slopes conspicuous for miles.

Australia is, to the Englishman, a country of grazing land; and in the downs of Queensland and New South Wales we have open mountain plains abounding in nutritious grasses. But the feature really peculiar to Australia is the scrub country. A large portion of South Australia and Victoria is clothed with various dwarf species of eucalyptus, known generally as Mallee; in appearance it is not unlike a willow or osier, and the stems are so thickly studded that ten or twelve are found on a square foot of ground; they grow to the height of 14 feet without a branch, covering sometimes thousands of miles with an unbroken mass of dark-brown vegetation. More dreaded by the explorer is the Mulga scrub, consisting of dwarf acacias, irregular bushes armed with strong spines, which make progress impossible. Next in importance to the mallee scrub in the area which it covers is the 'heath,' consisting of level, sandy tracts, grassless, almost treeless, but clothed with a mass of stunted,

A Water-hole in C. Australia (p. 6)

woody vegetation, about 2 feet high. From lat. 28° northwards is found the spinifex or porcupine grass; it covers the sandy plains for hundreds of miles, and the area taken up by it is probably greater than by any other Australian plant. Spinifex is a hard, spiny grass, growing in tussocks of from 18 inches to 5 feet in diameter; its shoots are stiff and sharp, of a yellowish colour when full grown, and quite uneatable even by camels. When the whole surface of the ground is clothed with it, horses are useless, and may have to be destroyed owing to their feet and legs being injured.

If the flora of Australia is characteristic, the fauna is no less remarkable. The only representatives of groups familiar to us in the Old World are rats and mice, all small, and the dingo, or wild dog, possibly introduced by the earliest human inhabitants. On the other hand, of the animals characteristic of Australia—the marsupials and monotremes—only one representation, the opossum, is now found outside the continent as a living species, and that in America. When we turn to fossil forms, we find that the New World is far more closely connected with Australia and Tasmania; and opinion is tending in the direction of the view that an antarctic continent with a mild climate united Australia with South America in early Tertiary times. Australia had its own invertebrate fauna already; but there came *viâ* Tasmania, which is richer in marsupial types, the vertebrates that are so characteristic of the Australian continent in our own day.

The peculiarity of the marsupials is that the young

one is born in an imperfect state and then transferred to a pouch or bag of loose skin, in which it attaches itself to the nipple and completes its development. Even after it has attained sufficient growth to enable it to run about and forage for itself, the young marsupial still returns to the mother's pouch for warmth and safety; and the female kangaroo, when hard pressed by the dogs, will sometimes sacrifice its young one to save its own life. The appearance of the kangaroo, the largest marsupial of Australia, is sufficiently well known to make a detailed description unnecessary. There are over fifty species of varying size, the largest, the Red Kangaroo, standing some 5 feet high and weighing 200 lbs.

The opossum of America must not be confused with the so-called opossum of Australia; the latter is properly a phalanger; some are as large as a hare, others as small as a dormouse. Allied to them are the flying opossums, the largest 3 feet in length. Other important marsupials are the wombat and the native cat.

When we turn from the mammals to the birds, we find far less of that isolation to which allusion has been made. Australia is indeed unrivalled in the variety and beauty of its birds; but they are representatives of the same orders and families which we find on the other continents of the world. Two important groups, it may be noted, are absent—the vultures and the woodpeckers—and among the less important deficiencies (from a non-culinary standpoint) may be mentioned the absence of pheasants.

To compensate for these lacunæ Australia has developed certain families peculiar to itself and its neighbours, and these correspond largely to the peculiarities of its flora. Australia is pre-eminently a land of flowers; and soft, juicy fruits are conspicuously absent. Among the birds of Australia we find, therefore, a large number of honey eaters—with brush-tipped tongues and powerful feet, to enable them to cling to the flowers while they suck the honey.

Another remarkable bird is the brush turkey or mound maker, which forms a nest, or rather incubating heap of earth and decaying vegetable matter; it never sits on its eggs. A mound has been measured which was 15 feet high and 60 feet in circumference. Other Australian birds are the laughing jackass, a species of kingfisher, many kinds of hawk and cockatoo; and last, but not least, the emu, representative of the ostrich tribe. The extraordinary richness of bird life in Australia will be realised when it is stated that while Europe has 500 species, Australia has 630. North America, of vastly greater area and more varied climate, has only 720.

The reptiles of Australia are important from the standpoint of the present work, as supplying a large portion of the food of the natives. There are 140 species of lizard and nearly 70 species of snake; the monitor lizard attains a size of 5 or 6 feet. Insects are likewise important, and in some parts of New South Wales millions of the *Agrotis spina* moth emerge annually from the chrysalis, to form in the old days the staple food of gatherings of the aborigines for months

together; in our own time they fall a prey to the flocks of crows which congregate as soon as the moth begins to appear.

Comparison of the Australian fauna and flora with the forms still subsisting or found as fossils in other parts of the world, enables us to fix approximately the geological period at which they must have found their way into Australia. In the case of man it is far otherwise. It has been mentioned above that the dingo was possibly introduced into Australia by man; but it seems not impossible that it long antedated man's appearance there; for there is said to be evidence to show that the dingo was in Australia in Miocene times, an epoch long preceding the existence of man, so far as our present knowledge goes. As regards the antiquity of man, it is a remarkable fact that, although vast quantities of alluvium have been turned over in the course of mining operations during the last fifty years, the human race can hardly be said to have a geological history in Australia at all. Stone hatchets have been dug up at various depths, but we do not know how fast the overlying material was deposited. A few years ago the so-called Warnambool footprints caused some excitement, which has recently been revived; at the end of 1890 a slab was dug from the limestone 54 feet from the surface, at a spot in the very centre of the bed and from the lower part of the limestone series. On it there are two broad, smooth depressions, one margin of each being preserved; they are separated by a ridge seven-eighths of an inch thick, and in front of them are two deep

imprints which might have been made by a pair of feet. Unfortunately the rock is very friable and all the original surface of the imprints has crumbled away, thus rendering the results of re-examination, even by the most distinguished authorities, of very doubtful value ; it is said that the imprints were filled with a thin clayey layer, as if the people who made them had had muddy feet. The local museum now contains these relics, and the label attached to them states that they are the traces of a man and woman who sat down side by side at a time when the stone was loose sand. One writer has been bold enough to say that the specimen proves man to have existed in Australia in Pliocene, that is, in late Tertiary times. The existence of Tertiary man has been maintained on other grounds, but not for Australia ; even therefore were Tertiary man generally accepted, which he is not, it would need very strong proofs before we could admit that man was in Australia at a period when the human race, on the ordinary view, was only just becoming human and when its varieties were as yet unknown. But quite apart from the fact that Professor Gregory sees no evidence that the rock is of Pliocene age, it is far from self-evident that the imprints are human at all.

Supposing, however, that they are human, it by no means follows that they are as old as Pliocene times. Indeed, Professor Gregory holds that if they are footprints they were made, not by naked, but by booted feet ! More important as evidence of man's antiquity is a find of stone axes at Shea's Creek, near Sydney, in

1896. They were at a depth of 11 feet below water-level, and associated with bones of the dugong, which bore cuts and scratches such as would be made by blows of a stone axe. This is good evidence, but Dr. Howitt, a good authority, tells us that the date of the deposit is uncertain, and so far from being Tertiary, it is uncertain whether the remains are even of the Quaternary period.

It is possible that more evidence may be brought together, or that facts may come to light from other parts of Australia, which will help us to date man's appearance in the continent. At present there seems to be no evidence from either Queensland or Victoria that man has a geological history in Australia, and from New South Wales the evidence is, as we have seen, uncertain. As regards Victoria the question has recently been discussed by Professor Gregory, and he comes to the surprising conclusion that man penetrated into Victoria only some three hundred years ago. There are many facts which bear out this conclusion, and a consideration of the aboriginal legends seems to support it.

In order to make clear why this conclusion was unexpected, it will be necessary to deal at this point with the theories as to the origin of the Australians. There are two kinds of evidence on which it is possible to base fairly reliable conclusions; these are, firstly, language, and, secondly, physical characters. As regards the first, it is a lamentable fact that our knowledge of Australian philology is of the smallest; we have at present virtually no data on which to go, in forming

a hypothesis as to the relations of Australian tongues with other families. As to the physical characters we know more; the facts will be set forth in the next chapter. But our knowledge is hardly definite enough to make conclusions more than eminently provisional.

In colour the Australian varies from coffee to almost pure black, if observers are to be trusted; his head is usually long; his hair bushy, but entirely different from that of the negro in being straight or at most curly. On the other hand, the Tasmanians, who, it must be remembered, were, for all practical purposes, a distinct race, had rounder heads and frizzly or woolly black hair and entirely black complexions. This woolly or frizzly character of the hair they share with the Papuans, neighbours of the Australians on the north, and the Melanesians, who lie to the east and north-east.

The most commonly accepted view of Australian origins is that put forward by Flower and Lyddekker, who hold that the original population was Melanesian in character, that is to say, that the Tasmanians represented the original inhabitants of Australia. In this connection it is interesting to note that there is a great similarity between the Tasmanians and another presumably early offshoot of the stock from which the Melanesians originated—the Andaman Islanders, as may be seen by consulting Mr. Ling Roth's work on the Tasmanians. But, as we have seen, the Tasmanians are frizzly haired; and hair character is very persistent. In order therefore to explain the straight hair of the average Australian, our authorities suppose

that there was an immigration of 'a low form of Caucasian Melanochroi,' that is to say, a people akin to the dark-skinned Dravidians of South India, distant cousins of the dark-skinned European races.

This immigration must have taken place, in all probability, after the separation of Tasmania from Australia; indeed, Dr. Howitt's views notwithstanding, it does not seem impossible that Tasmania was originally peopled by water and not by land. On the other hand, it seems probable that Torres Straits were, at the time of this invasion, dry land, as was much of the area between Australia and the continent of Asia. A great stumbling-block in the way of this hypothesis is the fact, if we may so regard it, that in Victoria man has left, so far as we know, no traces which can by any possibility go back as far as to antedate the Caucasian immigration; but whether the Tasmanians went by land or by sea, it seems probable that their starting-point was Victoria; and we cannot see why, if they were in Victoria, they should have cleared out, bag and baggage, unless they were dispossessed by the invaders. It might, of course, be suggested that the Tasmanians came from South or West Australia; and in fact the word for water at Cape Leeuwin is the same as that in one of the Tasmanian dialects. But this seems to be no more than one of those chance coincidences, which are especially probable in a language poor in consonants. In any case this hypothesis has to face the difficulty that at Cape Leeuwin, the supposed place of embarkation, canoes are not in use at the present day; yet we cannot

suppose that the whole Negrito population of West Australia was either wiped out, leaving not a trace of its culture behind, save a single word, or, in default of this, that the inhabitants migrated bodily in canoes into Tasmania. If, therefore, the late appearance of man in Victoria can be taken as proved, the origin of the Tasmanians is an unsolved problem, for the land connections alluded to when the marsupials were under discussion, were, of course, far older than the probable date of man's appearance on the earth. For man was preceded by a long array of other mammalia, extinct or still subsisting; and if he reached Tasmania by land, so may and would they have done also.

These difficulties notwithstanding, there is no need to discard the Negrito-Caucasic hypothesis. We find, especially in South-East Australia, traces of a curly haired race, or of curly haired elements in the present stock; they may well be the result of crosses between frizzly- and straight-haired peoples. In West Australia, both near Cape Leeuwin and on the Murchison River, the stone implement is said to be Tasmanian in character; possibly, therefore, the coincidence of the word for water points to racial unity, though it by no means follows that the Tasmanians came from West Australia. Like the Ancient Britons, they may have been driven down into Tasmania, and at the same time another remnant forced westwards; in favour of this hypothesis tells the marked difference in initiation customs between the western and west-central areas of Australia.

Of quite modern date, in all probability, is a Papuan

element in the very north of the Cape York Peninsula, and a Malay strain in the north and north-west, introduced by the *trepang* (sea-slug) fishers. But it seems possible that for long periods before this there was Papuan infiltration rather than invasion over a considerable part of the north of Australia. The outrigger, which certainly came from New Guinea, is found on both sides of the Gulf and at Port Essington; there is evidence that initiation masks, though not, it is true, of a Papuan type, are in use over a large area in the north; and possibly only our ignorance of northern tribes prevents me from giving a long list of Papuan elements in Australian culture. The physical evidence, however, must decide whether it is only an infiltration of culture, or whether there was also an infusion of Papuan blood over this area; and physical evidence is almost entirely wanting. One can never tell whether a photograph is of a typical or an exceptional individual; and even photographs are difficult to obtain, those of the Queensland tribes excepted.

As dreadful examples of how not to theorise may be quoted some of the earlier views on the origin of the Australians. In 1839 Fitzroy, of *Beagle* fame, opined that the Australians and Tasmanians sprang from a party of negroes driven by storms from the coast of Africa; and fifty years later the same view was taken and based on elaborate arguments by E. M. Curr. The Rev. J. Mathew, on the other hand, finds a Malay element in Australia, superposed on the two earlier stocks; but his arguments are entirely philological, and the words on which he relies are selected

at random from different tribes; they are only twelve in all; and the Malay words to which they are traced back are not purely Malay, but part of a common Oceanic language, in existence long before Malays were ever heard of. Dr. Fraser, not he of the *Golden Bough*, goes further afield and brings his negroid population from Babylonia, whence it was driven into South India by the confusion of tongues resulting from Nimrod's aggressions. From India they were driven by Dravidians coming from Central Asia, perhaps about the time of Homer.

It may be profitable to glance for a moment at the reasons which would lead every anthropologist to reject this conjecture at sight. If history and archæology count for anything, the people of Mesopotamia in 1500 B.C., the epoch of the supposed migration, had bows and pottery and were acquainted with metal-working. But if there is one thing more certain than any other, it is that the Australians have no pottery, and no knowledge of metals; the bow is found, an immigrant from New Guinea, in the extreme north, as we have already seen; from the Gulf of Carpentaria is said to have come a specimen of bow and quiver in the Sydney Museum; and in the Brewarina in South Queensland, the aborigines of the present day use bow and arrow to slaughter the stock of the whites who have dispossessed them of the land which had been theirs for ages until sixty years ago. But everything goes to show that the Australians of to-day, so far from having come from Babylonia, have never been in contact with a civilised race. Not only so, but their

stone implements are rude, less skilfully worked than the majority of implements in Europe. We cannot, of course, apply European chronology to other parts of the world; but it seems clear that the separation of the Australians from the rest of the world must have taken place at a remote period. Even more remote must have been the passing out of the Tasmanians from their primitive home. Even if we cannot rely on the view that their incursion into Australia and possibly Tasmania took place at a time when Torres Straits were to be crossed dry shod, the culture of the Tasmanians, even lower than that of the Australians, almost eolithic, if indeed there be eoliths, is a proof that they have been cut off from the stream of human progress for an even longer period than the Australians. In respect of culture they stood at an indisputably lower plane than any people now on the face of the earth, or known to have existed for many thousands of years past. But the 'march of civilisation' has wiped them off the face of the earth, and the secret of their origin and migrations may never come to light.

CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Stature of the Arunta. Physiognomy. Pigmentation, skin, hair. Body scars. Small extremities. Natives of South Australia and Queensland. Racial fœtor. Track of foot. Carriage of body.

AUSTRALIA is a very large area, and even apart from intermixture evidenced by variations in the form of the skull, we should expect to find that climate and food, as well as the greater or less advance in the few arts of life which the aborigines possess, have no small influence on the bodily appearance of the different tribes. Added to these influences we have in our own day the influence of the white man, seldom anything but demoralising, of the 'comforts' of civilisation, mainly in the shape of whisky and of European diseases. It must therefore be understood that a description of a tribe in one district is not necessarily true of a tribe in another or even in the same district. It will therefore be convenient to record the impressions of various observers without attempting to sum them up.

Near the centre of the continent lives the Arunta tribe, till recently virtually unknown, but forming, since 1898, the subject of much discussion owing to its anomalous social organisation and its ingenious

philosophy; for so it must be termed, unless we extend to it the title of religion. Messrs. Spencer and Gillen found the Arunta to be about 5 ft. 5½ inches high on an average, the tallest being 5 inches more, the shortest 8 inches less; the women were about 4 inches shorter, and varied to the extent of 5 inches; so that they are, on the whole, slightly shorter than we are. The chest measurement of the men was 36 inches on an average, or considerably more than the English average; it may be noted that the chest and upper extremities are almost invariably better developed than the legs.

The face has in some cases a markedly Jewish aspect, due to the pronounced curve of the nose; but in many faces it will be seen that the nose is snub and in nearly every case the width is considerable; this is caused to some extent by the custom of flattening the noses of children, and reinforced by the introduction of the nose-pin, seen in some of the warriors' noses (Pl. XVI.). A peculiar feature is the marked depression of the root of the nose, well seen in the woman figured in Pl. IV. The complexion is not, as commonly imagined, jet black; in fact, no really coal-black peoples exist. The Arunta and many other tribes are described by good observers as being a chocolate brown; the women are slightly lighter in shade than the men; and the children of a decidedly lighter tint, which, however, rapidly darkens.

The hair is rather dark brown than black, but it is so matted together, and red ochre is so freely used as an embellishment, that the colour is hard to decide.

Victorian Woman (p. 20)

Spencer and Gillen regard jet black as the normal colour, but not one of the twelve specimens in my possession approach this; in fact, the hair of one full-blood woman, twenty years of age, is fair to sandy at the tips, and others are of a reddish brown, darkening towards the roots. At the age of fifty or sixty the hair turns white, as is shown in Pl. IX. In the men it is distinctly waved, and sometimes forms regular ringlets on the shoulders. They never go bald. Sometimes, especially in the case of old men, the whole body is covered with short crisp hair, black in earlier, white in later life. The beard is usually well developed, and in the old men gives a dignified appearance to the face, as is seen in Pl. IX. The band on the head of many of the figures of the men in Pl. XVI. is the *chilara*, and covers a portion of the scalp made bare artificially at the age of eighteen or twenty, by pulling out all the hairs. A head band is also worn by women (Pl. X.). A typical Kaitish face is shown in Pl. I. They are neighbours of the Arunta.

A noticeable feature in the case of one of the women and some of the men (Pls. IV., XXI.) is the scars with which the body is decorated; they are made with flint, or at the present day with glass, and ashes or the down of the eagle hawk are rubbed in, to make the wound heal, as they say, though the actual effect is to cause the raised scar. The belt shown in Pl. XXVIII. is tightened to serve as a famine belt when a man is hungry, and this often produces a curious flap of skin on the abdomen, which must be distinguished from the

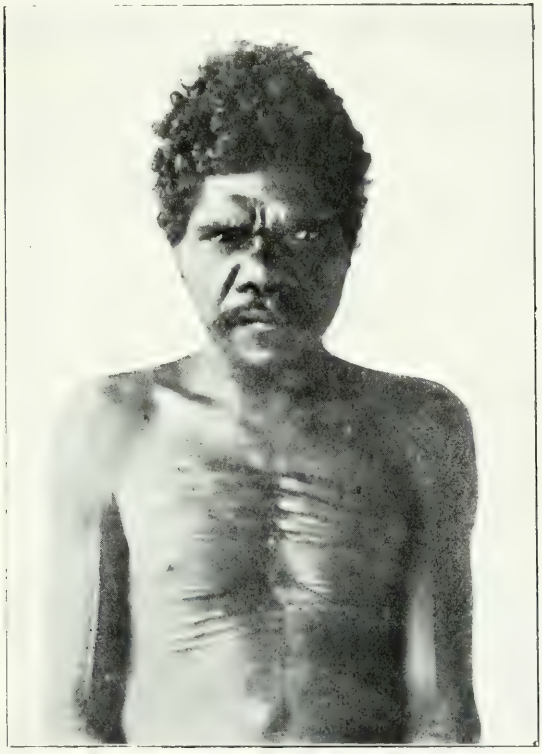
scars. As a rule, however, both men and women are well nourished, as indeed may be seen by the photographs reproduced. A curious feature is the smallness of the hands; it is seldom that a European can put his hand comfortably into the grip of a shield. Spencer and Gillen found that the average span was only about $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and the longest no more than $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches. As mentioned above, the legs are thin, the calf averaging little over $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The shape of the head varies considerably; the relation of breadth to length was on an average $74\frac{1}{2}$ to 100; in other words, the cephalic index was 74·5, but the extremes were 66·8 and 80·5; this is distinctly longer than the average for the rest of Australia so far as it has been arrived at.

In the Arunta the length of the foot is on an average 10 inches, of the women about three-quarters of an inch less. It may be added that both the Arunta and other Australian natives are very clever with their toes; they will pick up objects with them, and drag spears after them in the grass by this means when they do not wish to attract attention; the soles of the feet are remarkably hard, and they travel over stony ground with less discomfort than a well-shod European.

Angas, writing nearly sixty years ago, gave a description of the inhabitants of South Australia, but he confines himself to general statements and gives no figures, so that it is impossible to compare his tribes with the Arunta; he states, however, that the eyes are universally of a dark, reddish hazel, with very black

WEIPA NATIVE, N. QUEENSLAND

MAPOON NATIVE



YOUNG MAN AT WEIPA, N. QUEENSLAND (p. 22)

lashes; the whites are tinged with yellow, and the eyes are near together.

In Victoria the natives seem to have been distinctly shorter than those in the centre of Australia, among whom are real giants, 6 feet 8 inches having been recorded in one case; their average height at Lake Tyers was only 5 feet $5\frac{3}{4}$ in the case of the men, and 5 feet 1 inch in the case of the women, the weights being 137 lbs. and $114\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. respectively.

Dawson, one of the earliest writers on New South Wales, speaks of the straight silky hair of the natives; the children and some of the adults were of a bright copper colour; he describes the white of the eye as speckled with dark-brown spots. He found all heights among the natives, from 6 feet 2 inches down to 5 feet.

The Rev. J. Mathew was especially familiar with the Kabi tribe of South Queensland. He says the new-born child is born singularly fair, but becomes gradually darker with age; dark skins are preferred by the natives. Yellow hair was found both in South Queensland and in New South Wales, but it was rare and perhaps pathological, due to lack of colouring matter such as we are familiar with in albinos. One native of Victoria he describes as follows: The brow was comparatively low and retreating, the eyebrows prominent and shaggy, eyes fairly large, and the white of a smoky yellowish tinge; the nose large and broad, but not flat; the nostrils wide; the mouth large; the lips thick, but without the swollen thickness of the negro lip; the cheekbones high; small and receding jaw, somewhat projecting; the teeth large. The trunk

in front is completely covered with dense hair, which spreads over the shoulders and down the outside of the upper arm. The beard was thick, long, and curly, with a tendency to fall in ringlets. But alongside of people like these, says Mathew, are found others with good-looking features according to a European standard. They have quite a different style of forehead, narrow, smooth, rounded, high; also a much smaller nose, sometimes straight and full, sometimes snub and inclining to be tip-tilted; the lips full, but not extra thick; and the facial outline a graceful oval.

The Yaraikanna of Cape York are within the sphere of Papuan influence, and differ markedly from other Australians.

A curious feature, shared by the Australians with other coloured races, is the distinctive odour exhaled by their bodies. This seems to be quite distinct from the merely dirty smell of the unwashed European, for it is said to be perceptible after they have bathed; it is no doubt exaggerated by their custom of rubbing oil or fat on their bodies; but there is certainly a smell peculiar to the black which disturbs cattle, dogs, and horses. According to one authority, it resembles the smell of phosphorus, and its effects on animals seem to be quite independent of any unpleasant memories of natives; for they show uneasiness when they are approached by one for the first time, and are not yet in a position to see the colour of the person who is near them.

The track left by the foot of an Australian is said to differ markedly from that of a European; the heel is

narrow, and the forepart of the foot comparatively broad; the inside edge of the foot bends inward in a peculiar way, a formation which may possibly be due to the method of climbing trees, of which a description is given in Chap. VI. The Arunta always walk with the toes well turned out; but in his case it cannot be connected with any large amount of tree-climbing, for the gum-trees are mostly stunted in the centre of Australia.

The carriage of the body is graceful in men and in the younger women; the head is thrown back and the trunk erect; in the case of the women this is partly due to their habit of carrying pitchis, or wooden (and bark) vessels, containing food and water, on their heads. Between twenty and twenty-five, however, drudgery, childbearing, and ill-usage tell upon the fair sex; and at the age of thirty they are little better than old hags; save for the absence of the beard the old women might be mistaken for old men. A particularly hideous feature in some of the central tribes is the scar in the centre of the scalp, which is due to the custom of cutting their heads when they are in mourning.

Accounts of their character differ markedly; some are said to be savage, others well disposed. Most observers agree that up to the age of puberty, possibly longer, they have an extraordinary facility in the acquisition of knowledge.

CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE, ART, SCIENCE

Language. Message sticks. Tribal messengers. Gesture language. Art, ground-drawings, rock-drawings, paintings, the red hand, Grey's figures. Science, astronomy, sun, moon, stars, eclipses. Medicine, magic, bleedings, healing of wounds, snake-bite ; herbal remedies, treatment of burns, diseases of aborigines. Relative mortality from wounds and diseases.

In Europe we are accustomed to find the same language spoken over large areas ; where there is a change of vocabulary there is often a change of grammatical structure ; at the same time certain families of languages, in use over a larger area, are related and show resemblances in grammar and vocabulary. In Australia it is very different ; the tribal areas are almost invariably small. Of the grammar we know, it is true, too little to say anything very definite ; but there is a certain general similarity in structure, syntactical relations being denoted by postfixes. When we examine the vocabularies, however, we find startling differences between those of tribes apparently identical in culture, organisation, and physical appearance ; a certain number of words are common to many, some to nearly all languages, but as a rule the knowledge of the language of one tribe is little help to the compre-

hension of that of their neighbours. A curious feature of the native languages is that few have any numerals above three or four; those that have them generally use compounds of one and two for five, six, and so on; thus in the Koko Yimidir language, of which vocabulary has come down to us in Cook's voyages, five is expressed by 'burla godera, burla godera, nulu nobun,' literally 'both two, both two, odd man one.' In other cases the form is simpler; the Pitta-Pitta, south of the Gulf, expresses five by 'pakoola-pakoolangooro,' *i.e.* two-two-one. Anything above the highest numeral is 'many.'

It must not, of course, be imagined that the blacks have no conception of higher numbers; that they have is clearly shown by an ingenious method of fixing a day for a future meeting. In some parts they touch various parts of the body in succession, the wrist, the arm, the head, etc., each standing for a particular day, until the intended date is reached. The two or more parties to the arrangement can then keep count of the flight of time by this ingenious system of mnemonics, and meet on the appointed day with as much certainty as if they noted their engagement in a diary. Another proof of the knowledge of higher numbers is found in the custom of giving names to their children according to the order in which they were born, the total number of names available being nine or ten for each sex.

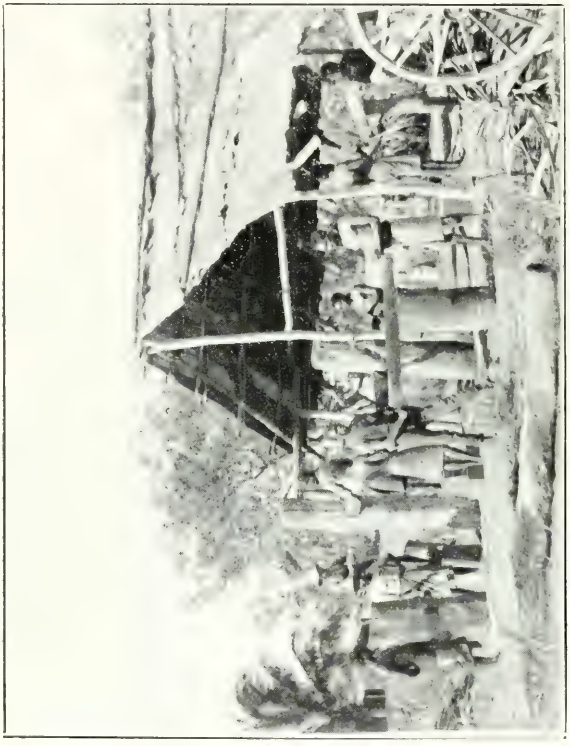
Another curious feature of the language is the small number of consonants, due perhaps in part to the custom of knocking out teeth, in part to the custom of

piercing the septum of the nose. *F*, *h*, *th*, *v*, *s*, and *z* are all absent; and initial *r* is rare.

In New South Wales, according to Threlkeld, the alphabet was as follows:—*a*, *b*, *d*, *e*, *i*, *k*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *ng*, *o*, *p*, *r*, *t*, *u*, *w*, *y*.

The verbal forms are exceedingly complicated; not only are there singular and plural numbers, but also dual; and dual may be either inclusive or exclusive, according as the speaker intends that 'we' shall include the person spoken to or not.

It is important to notice that as regards vocabulary, native languages are sometimes liable to change very rapidly. There is a story as to certain runaways having left a tribe and established themselves in an unoccupied area; after thirty years, they or their children spoke a language almost unintelligible to the original tribe. This may have been due in part to the presence of captured women in their midst, whom they took from other tribes; but in view of the linguistic accomplishments of the Australian, it is certainly surprising that the change was so great as it seems to have been. On the other hand, Cook's Endeavour River tribe seems to have the same vocabulary as 130 years ago. Another cause, which, however, operates mainly where the group is of some size—the numbers seem to range from 20 to 200—is the custom of changing the names of certain objects because the word which designated them was identical or formed part of the name of a dead man. To mention the name of the dead would be, according to savage belief both in Australia and many other parts



The Native under Civilization (p. 29)

of the world, to summon his ghost; accordingly his name is not mentioned, and the word drops out of use, sometimes for a period of years, sometimes for ever, unless chance should bring it into currency again.

In the matter of a knowledge of languages the Australian can give points to most of us. It is true that he has the advantage of having the foreign language at his very door; but even that does not seem to help English people to learn Welsh. It is perhaps a material help that the grammatical structure tends to be identical; still it is no small thing for a man to speak two other languages with ease and understand a fair number more, as was the case in the north of New South Wales. It is said that from two to three weeks suffices for the learning of a new language; and this agrees with what we know of the extraordinary aptitude of Australians, especially in youth, for the acquisition of knowledge. One of the early voyagers has left on record that a West Australian took no more than five minutes to learn the use of the sextant, whereas the ordinary English boy required some six months for his education in these matters. Similarly, Bishop Salvado records that a West Australian learnt to knit in five minutes!

In connection with the language, some remarks may be made on the message sticks of the Australians. Like most other rude peoples they had nothing of the nature of writing; in common with many other peoples they painted or sculptured animals, human beings, and other marks on bark, stones, sand, and trees; and the inside of their opossum skin cloaks, like their boome-

rangs, in some parts were marked ; but we cannot say that they had any system of picture-writing ; we do not even know that the marks had a meaning, as marks of ownership or magical figures. In the message sticks, however, they seem to have had a system of communication which might in time have developed into a script. In a great many cases the stick was simply a reminder to the messenger ; just as the parties to an agreement marked on their bodies, in pipeclay, the tale of the days that had to elapse before they met, so the message sticks served as a calendar to the bearer, and at the same time as a mnemonic of the message which he had to deliver ; but without the intervention of the messenger the piece of wood had no meaning for the recipient. Dr. Howitt, however, records some cases in which the stick was simply handed over ; in this case the marks must have had an intrinsic meaning, no improbable hypothesis when we consider how marvellously skilful the Australian is in interpreting the smallest signs when he is called upon to track a lost animal or a human being. In his very earliest youth he begins to learn the language of footprints and other hunters' lore. When, as we shall see later, special animals were associated with certain people or groups, it would not be a long step to make the drawing of the animal stand for the signature of the group which bore its name ; or perhaps the footprints alone might have been used. We can, however, trace little or nothing of any such system, and few conventional signs were in use.

Some mention must be made of the tribal messengers of Australia. Some of these ceremonial messengers are women, but they are usually men. They must be distinguished from the tribal traders, whose persons do not seem to have been respected; there were different classes of messengers, but some degree of sanctity applied to them all. Their functions were to call together tribes for war, or initiation ceremonies, to arrange marriages, to initiate peace negotiations, to call tribal councils, and generally to disseminate information. They wore certain distinguishing marks, according to the errand on which they were; in some parts they travelled in pairs. When a messenger arrived at the camp to which he was sent he gave a particular cooee; all within hearing assembled to hear what he had to say, but not a word was spoken to him till he thought proper to deliver his message; sometimes he sits silent for a long time, but when once he gets started the eloquence of the Australian messenger is described as wonderful. When a 'postman' comes with news he sits down and relates it to one of the old men, who repeats it to the tribesmen. Grey describes how they have a kind of loud recitative, both for this purpose and for overcoming the social barriers raised by customs of avoidance, to which reference is made in Chapter X.

More important than the message stick is the gesture language, which is, however, very local in its distribution. Dr. Howitt has recorded a vocabulary of it from Central Australia, Dr. Roth from the south of

the Gulf, and I have in my possession an unpublished one obtained for Dr. Seligmann by Captain Pim from the Otati near Cape Grenville. So far as can be judged by these few examples, a previous acquaintance with the gesture would be necessary to ensure its comprehension; for example, among the Pitta-Pitta, 'crow' is denoted by holding the fingers apart from one another like a claw, and then turning the wrist so as to give the idea of digging; this is in imitation of a crow scratching the ground. The Otati sign for pigeon is to stroke the 'Adam's apple' with the thumb and index finger of the right hand, perhaps in allusion to the crop of the bird. Others would be naturally intelligible. Among the Wurungerri the sign for 'to hear' is to point to the ear with the right hand; the Eucla and the Ngarrego, hundreds of miles distant, use the same sign; a common sign for 'man' is to indicate with the hands the size of the beard.

The importance of these gestures may be imagined when it is remembered that in some tribes the widow is condemned to months of absolute silence, during which she communicates by gestures alone. Not less important is it as a means of communicating with strange tribes. Dr. Howitt records a case in which a water famine drove a number of men from their own district; they fell in with a tribe of whose language they did not understand a word; and for a fortnight conversation was carried on by the aid of gestures, although, of course, they probably had no previous acquaintance with the gesture vocabulary in use among their hosts. Almost equally important is the

use of gesture language to interrogate strangers as to their disposition and intentions. In Australia the stranger is an enemy, as often as not; it is therefore essential to ascertain his tribe and the totem-kin of the tribe to which he belongs; or in default of that, to find out if his intentions are peaceful. A common sign for peace was to wave a green bough, a practice which is not confined to Australia. On the other hand, hostility was denoted, though perhaps it was hardly a part of a regular gesture language, in West Australia, by taking the end of the beard in the mouth, and then spitting it out again; or by throwing up dust with the toes. Curiously enough the same chewing of the beard is found south of the Gulf of Carpentaria and in the same sense, though it is difficult to see what natural basis there is for such an interpretation.

We also hear of smoke signals, and an elaborate code has been attributed to some tribes, without, however, any solid foundation in fact.

It may seem strange to the non-anthropological reader to hear of the art of savages; for in modern life we are accustomed to regard art as something concerned with the beautiful. Psychologically, however, we can hardly distinguish a child's earliest scrawls from the finished work of a Royal Academician; consequently, provided the psychological basis is the same, we must speak of savage art, understanding thereby, when we are speaking of material objects, the products of non-utilitarian activities.

All the world over peoples in the lower stages of culture are given to adorning themselves, their

weapons, and their surroundings with gay colours, uncouth figures, or unintelligible designs, which are frequently geometrical. The personal adornment and the weapons of the Australians are mentioned elsewhere; here we are concerned with the drawings on rocks, trees, sand, and other objects, which stand in no close personal relationship to man. The ground-drawings, as they are termed by Spencer and Gillen, are of a somewhat different character from the rock-paintings, and these again from the tree marks. The Central and Northern tribes during their initiation ceremonies produce elaborate representations, consisting of circles, patches, and sinuous lines, drawn in yellow, black, and red, outlined with white spots. These represent in the Arunta tribe the eggs, feathers, and other parts of the emu; but inasmuch as these diagrams are used in the totemic ceremonies of the emu totem, it may be doubted how far they are technically art; probably they are better described as magical designs. Among the Eastern tribes drawings on bark and figures moulded in earth or made of wood were in use; and we can hardly distinguish the ground-drawings of the Central tribes from these other products, which do not obviously come within even a popular definition of artistic products. More widely found are the rock-drawings, sculptures, and paintings; some of these, however, are ceremonial in character; but as we cannot distinguish between the two classes by simple inspection, no attempt will be made here to treat them separately; the objects used at initiation ceremonies, etc., are, it may be noted, as a rule, destroyed at the termination of the

celebration. Among the Arunta the sacred rock-drawings are mainly geometrical, like the ground-drawings; the ordinary figures are usually animals or plants, rarely human beings or portions of them, the hand being not infrequent. In the south and east attempts at depicting scenes such as emu hunts are not uncommon; in Central Australia such synthetic art is absent, and there is no attempt to sculpture the surface of the rock in the way that attracted the attention of the early settlers near Port Jackson. Occasionally designs are found on rocks similar to those in use at the totemic ceremonies; they have, however, according to the natives, no meaning; here we seem to be in the presence of real artistic productions. It should be noted that though these designs are termed geometrical, it by no means follows that they have no meaning, nor yet that they were always geometrical. The simplification of design is a feature with which the study of savage art all the world over has made us familiar; an original bird motive becomes degraded, because the artist either has not the requisite skill or the necessary time, or, it may be, because all he wishes to do is to suggest to himself and to others who will recognise the motive, what an outsider can only explain by studying the evolution of the design—some part of the body of an animal, it may be, which has magical significance—but here we are, of course, trenching on utilitarian ground and leaving the sphere of pure art.

Some stress has been laid upon the practice of printing or stencilling hands in black or red on the

walls of caves and elsewhere, and an attempt has been made to argue that it is a sign of foreign influence. Nothing, however, is more certain than that the Australians of the present day decorate the rocks in this way. Sometimes the hand is smeared with pigment; at other times it is laid on the face of the rock, the mouth is filled with charcoal or red ochre, the rock damped and the pigment blown from the mouth; when the hand, the fingers of which are outstretched, is removed, the outline of it is left in colours. No magical or other idea seems to be attached to these hands.

More remarkable, if the published representations of them are correct, are the representations of human figures found by Sir George Grey on the Glenelg River, and by Bradshaw not far from the same spot on the Prince Regent River. Other localities from which superior artistic skill has been reported are North and North-East Queensland, Central Queensland, the Kimberley district, and various islands off the north and north-west coasts; but, with the exception of a scene at Nardoo Creek, they do not seem to differ from ordinary rock-drawings, save in the use of colours; and the use of colours is so general in Central Australia that we can feel no surprise that they sometimes appear in rock-paintings as well as in ceremonial representations. The work at Nardoo Creek is reported to be seventy feet across, and represents a lake of fire 'out of which stretch dusky-brown arms in hundreds in every conceivable position, the muscles knotted, the hands grasping convulsively, some pointing

a weird finger upwards, others clenched as if in the agonies of death.' If the compiler of the work from which this passage is quoted, Mr. T. Worsnop, Town Clerk of Adelaide, has not allowed himself to be imposed on, this picture must be something very far in advance of other Australian art works, and it is very desirable that we should have before us an authentic copy of it, which might probably be readily produced by photography by the aid of magnesium light. Until the description is in some way authenticated, it does not seem possible to lay any stress on this pictograph.

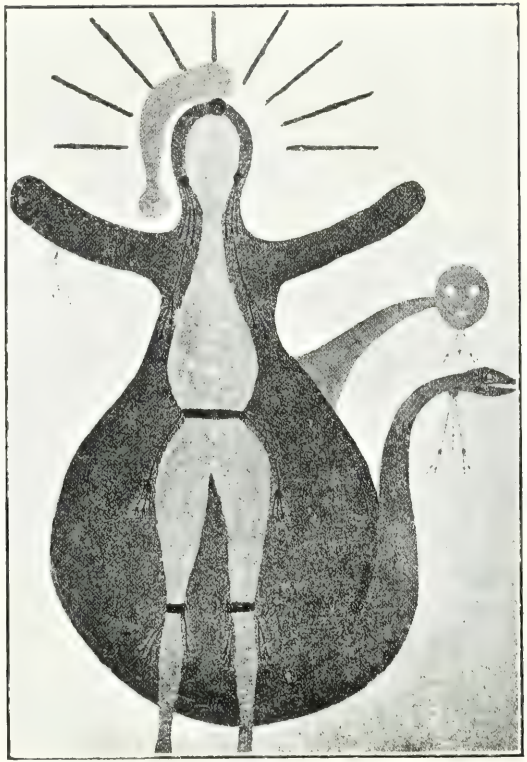
Grey's drawings merit a more careful examination; we may feel doubts as to the accurate reproduction of the colours of the original; for it is hardly likely that an explorer in the wilds of Australia had a sufficient supply of pigments to make an accurate painting, and Gregory expressly says the originals are faint; but it is not the colouring of the paintings which is the important point.

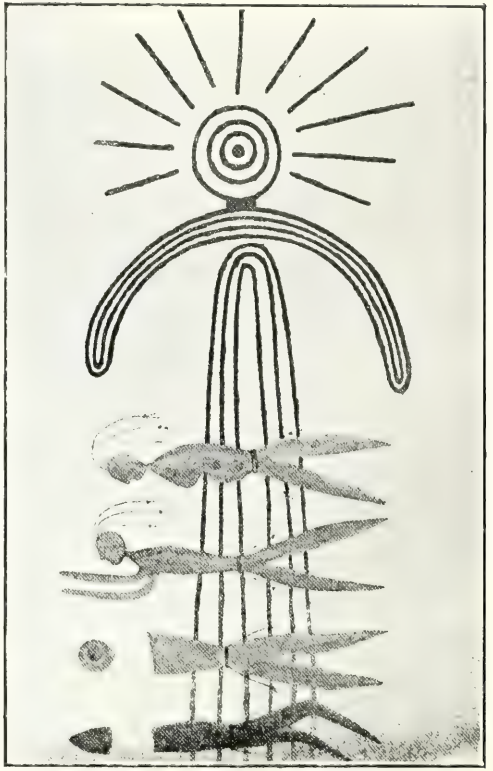
Grey figures in colours five of the paintings discovered by him; the cave itself is shown in the frontispiece to the first volume of his travels; and another illustration shows a human profile cut in the sandstone rock opposite a cave. The first figure was visible from the mouth of the cave; the face is some two feet long, and the explorer received rather a shock as he saw this strange visage peering down upon him. The background is black and the figure itself brilliant red and white; round the eyes, which, with a rudimentary nose, are the only features shown in the face,

is an oval of yellow; and the eye is shown by another oval of greenish grey. The outline of the head is oval, and in all the figures save one no indication of the chin is given, the curve of the head passing into that of the neck—a very thick one. Round the head was a narrow band of deep red, then a broad band of brilliant red, crossed by fifteen triple rows of white dots; outside this came another narrow band of deep red, and then outside this red rays, formed by wavy lines, such as one sometimes sees in public-house signs of the Sun. Grey says that the eyes were black, surrounded by red lines; his illustration must therefore be erroneous. The red lines are, however, shown, and are continued to form the outline of the nose. The arms are shown and part of the body, which seems to be clothed with a garment of some sort, decorated with red bars, non-continuous.

Another group of four figures is similar, save that the halo is mainly blue; one seems to wear a girdle. Another painting figures a kangaroo, and a third a man with very rudimentary features holding a kangaroo above his head; in each case the animal is excellently drawn.

The last of the figures is that of a man wearing a long garment which leaves exposed only the head, hands, and feet; the two latter are of deep red colour. The outline of the face is here completed, but the nose is wanting; two broad halos are shown, of yellow and very light red. In the outer one Grey shows various lines, on which much stress has been laid. But he admits that the painting has suffered from exposure, and was uncertain whether the lines were of the nature





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of writing or represented a head-dress. It is therefore impossible to base any argument on them.

It should not be overlooked that there were many other paintings in these caves, all apparently of an ordinary Australian type. It does not, however, follow that the paintings just described were done by the same hand. From the point of view of technique there is no need to draw any distinction between them; but the important point is the clothing of the figures. If this is correctly shown—and it seems difficult to suppose that Grey made a mistake in so obvious a matter—the paintings can hardly have been the work of the present natives of Australia.

The conclusion is borne out by the character of the sculptured head already mentioned; it is certainly not Australian in type, if Grey's drawing is accurate. A means of testing the origin of the drawings seems to be analysis of the pigments used in them; a small portion might be removed without serious injury to the painting, and the result might be decisive.

It is certainly singular that the only other paintings at all comparable to those just described are in the immediate neighbourhood. In these, too, the human figures (Pls. VII., VIII.) seem distinctly non-Australian; and it is of some importance that the natives seem to have overlaid them in some cases with their own productions; but so much turns on the question of whether they are accurately reproduced, that it is unwise to lay too much stress on this point. They seem to differ from Grey's in being unclothed; on the other hand, there are well-marked evidences of head-dresses and other ornaments.

Unfortunately none of the paintings contain any weapons or implements. If the bow or other non-Australian weapons were shown, we might without fear conclude that the paintings were the work of a crew of shipwrecked Timorese, whose visit remained without important results for the culture or physical type of Australia. Without this decisive evidence the conclusion just suggested remains by no means improbable. But a re-examination of Grey's paintings, and particularly the gathering of evidence as to the rate at which they are being obliterated, might do much to throw light on their probable age, and at the same time, if they are comparatively recent, not more than a few hundred years old, on their probable origin.

The fact already mentioned, that not a single element of Australian culture, outrigged boats excepted, can be definitely ascribed to foreign origin, seems conclusive against the view that these paintings are remains of a higher civilisation once prevalent in the continent. It is true that there is evidence of masks along a wide belt from Roebuck Bay eastwards, and this may be due to Papuan influence; but the cave-paintings depicted by Grey are not Papuan; and wherever the artists came from, if they were not Australians with eccentric ideas, their influence was confined to the artistic instruction of the natives who visited the caves in later times.

The geographical and astronomical notions of the Australians are naturally of a distinctly savage type. The earth is supposed to be flat, and some of the tribes hold that it is surrounded with water; but this can

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hardly point to a knowledge of the fact that Australia is an island.

It was a common belief in Victoria that the sky was supported on props where it rested on the mountains in the north-east. An amusing story is told of a demand sent down the Murray from tribe to tribe, according to which the props were becoming rotten, and the tribes in the neighbourhood must have a supply of axes, or they would not be answerable for the consequences. The Wotjoballuk could even say who it was who propped up the sky, so that the sun could move; the magpie was the benefactor of creation in this matter. The Wiimbaio said that the motionless sun was set moving by Noorele, a god or demi-god.

It was the universal belief of the Australian tribes that the sun was a woman, but some accounted for its existence by supposing that an emu's egg was thrown into the air by some one, and that it caught fire. The Arunta can explain why it is warmer in summer, for the sun being a woman, naturally carries a firestick; this blazes sometimes, and then it is warm. In the evening the woman disappears under the arm of another old woman; but the neighbouring Dieri are nearer the truth in thinking that the sun is below the earth at night; in fact, they can show the hole in the ground where it goes down every evening. The Wotjoballuk can tell us why the sun makes this journey; she is a woman who had a little son, and went with him to dig yams; somehow they became separated, and she wandered round the edge of the earth, coming

up the other side; this she has continued to do from force of habit.

The sun being a woman, the moon is naturally a man. Some of the tribes can see the man in the moon too; he was a black who attacked them, but he got killed and was burnt, and you can still see the marks of the burns in the moon. In North Queensland it is the moon who is put in the sky out of the way of a fire; he helped his nephew, the sparrow-hawk, out of a difficulty, when the other blacks had done nothing to assist him; so the sparrow-hawk made a big fire, and at last burnt them all up; but his benefactor he put in the sky, out of harm's way, and there he remains to this day. The Cape Bedford blacks know why the moon waxes and wanes; he has two wives, one is the summer sun, the other the winter sun; at new moon he is starving, so he goes on a fishing expedition, with the result of increasing the size of his waist-belt so much that he appears as the full moon.

Eclipses do not seem to have exercised the minds of the Australians to any great extent, but the Arunta know what to do when one comes on; they start throwing spears, for that drives away the evil spirit which has come in front of the sun or moon; more commonplace is the suggestion that what is hiding the luminary is a hostile tribe of blacks, who put bark in front of it.

Comets excite some apprehension; one explanation is that they are enemies with long spears. Shooting-stars are the souls of the dead, or hostile wizards dropping firesticks to kill some one.

Of course, the stars have their legends; the Magellanic clouds are the teeth of a serpent, and as long as they are visible, silence must be observed in the camp, for fear of attracting their attention. The Pleiades are a group of young women providing corroboree music for the young men who form Orion's Belt. According to others, the men in Orion's Belt are in a canoe, crossing a river. The Milky Way is a river, full of fish. The Aurora shows that there is a battle going on, and the colour is due to the blood; the same explanation is given of the ruddy colour of the moon, caused by the feasts of the souls of the dead. The rainbow is a great fish, or a snake, taking away the rain which enemies have sent. Thunder is sometimes the voice of a god, sometimes an independent being of great power.

A great part of the medicine of the aborigines is mere mummery—magical performances—which can at best act through suggestion. A cord is put on the sick man's head or chest, the other end of which is in the mouth of a woman; she rubs her gums till the blood comes, and this is supposed to be the patient's blood, and he feels correspondingly relieved. When a man was the operator, he generally sucked the affected part with his mouth directly, apparently extracting pieces of stone, bone, or other magical implements, to which reference is made in the chapter on Magic. Sometimes rubbing or pressing was resorted to, which, under the civilised name of massage, may be admitted to be an effective remedy.

Of more positive but equally ineffective medicaments

may be mentioned blood, which was only one of a number of organic remedies; it was removed from any healthy male, usually from the ulnar vein, collected in a wooden trough, and dabbed over the patient with an emu feather brush.

Patients were also bled from superficial vessels; headache is treated by making the nose bleed; in olden days, a favourite remedy was a good crack on the head with a waddy, but less heroic methods seem to have come in with the advent of our emasculated white race.

Dressings of fat or grease, mud, leaves, bark, charcoal, and lotions of various sorts are used for wounds and sprains. A large wound might be closed with an eagle-hawk's feather covered with *melaleuca* bark, the whole bound up in kangaroo skin. Fractures were treated with splints, which did not, however, immobilise the neighbouring joints; the splints were of bark or ordinary pieces of wood. Sometimes superficial scarifications over the seat of the fracture were employed, short pieces of wood or bone put over them, and the whole tied up with wild vine (*Calamus*).

The treatment of snake-bite consisted in scarification, sucking, and occasionally ligaturing, either singly or both above and below the wound. In the Boulia District a vapour bath is an important part of the cure. How many herbal remedies are in use it is impossible to say; Roth enumerates over fifty from North Queensland alone; it is therefore probable that the aboriginal Pharmacopœia was of considerable extent. In the south of Queensland instruction in medicine is said

to be given at the initiation ceremonies, proficiency being tested by practical work. The preparation of some of the remedies was far from simple ; the Bundela women used a small herb, not yet identified, growing about nine inches high ; a fire was made and stones put on it ; on them was placed a bowl of water, from which it seems clear that in this part the natives could heat it, and the plant boiled and placed in a strong medicine bucket ; the steam was confined for a time with *melaleuca* bark. This remedy was used internally in small doses. More heroic was the treatment of burns with a kind of milky mangrove ; the bark and sap were both employed, and the face of the person who cut the tree had to be averted, for swelling and pain followed if any juice fell on the bare skin. Snake fat was spread on the burn ; over this came a piece of bark and then the juice, which had been collected in a medicine bucket. Where the pain was severe, juice was spread directly upon the affected part, or bark rolled in little bits was lighted and the glowing embers applied. This was only for strong patients ; as a precaution they were held down by two men.

Little is known of the diseases of the aborigines ; they suffer from skin affections unknown in Europe, and a disease like smallpox seems to have existed among them, at a time when no European had suffered from it in New Holland, as it was then called. The English doctors in 1789 declared that the natives were affected with this disease, and something resembling it carried off the natives by hundreds at various times ; those who recovered from it seem to have been marked

like smallpox patients; but for all that it is very doubtful if they have had real smallpox among them. Dr. Howitt informs me that he knows of no case in which a native has suffered from it.

As might have been expected, European diseases played havoc with the blacks; measles and even common colds were deadly, and where influences have been at work to induce them to clothe themselves, consumption has not been slow to mark down her victims. Like all savages, the Australian is singularly lacking in resistance to disease; in the matter of wounds, however, his viability is enormous. In the description of their duels it has been shown that they receive with comparative equanimity blows that would fell an ox; from more serious injuries they recover in a perfectly miraculous manner. Collins tells a story of how a black had a spear driven through his loins close to the vertebræ. English surgeons failed to extract the weapon, and the patient went off, trusting to nature for recovery; for several weeks he walked about with the spear in its original position, and then his wife removed it with her teeth as her only surgical instrument. In another case a spear passed through the chest, and the point appeared under the blade bone; a surgeon, who saw the man after the spear had been withdrawn, declared that portions of the lungs were adherent to it, but the sufferer simply plugged the holes with gum and grass, and was able to take an eighteen mile stroll at the end of the week to help his convalescence.

Fractures of the skull, thick though it is, are pro-

bably not infrequent; but the native recovers from them with equal facility. As an example of native apathy with regard to wounds may be quoted the case of the West Australian mentioned by Grey. The man had been wounded in that portion of his frame which he presented to his enemy in the act of retiring, and a barbed spear remained fixed in the wound. An Englishman regarded the patient with an air of pity, and the latter promptly took advantage of his situation; advancing towards his soft-hearted friend, he turned round, holding the spear, still in the wound, with one hand, and remarked, 'Poor fellow, sixpence, give it 'um.'

Under the circumstances it is less surprising that the frequent fights are not very deadly. Probably the blood feud has done far more to keep down the population than intertribal war.

In connection with disease may be mentioned the treatment of old people, which seems to have varied from tribe to tribe. In some cases they were abandoned, in others they were well treated and suffered no lack.

CHAPTER IV

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Arts and crafts: stone axes, knives, drills, etc.; bones, teeth, shells as tools. Water-carriers. Fish hooks. Gum. Pigments. String-making, hair, fibre; knots and splices. Baskets and nets. Contents of woman's bag. Fire-making, drill, saw. Clothing and ornaments. Oiling and painting of body.

To describe in detail the arts and crafts of even a single Australian tribe would be a work of some magnitude. A survey of the whole field might be interesting to the technologist; but the ordinary reader might fight shy of a systematic treatment of the manufacture of stone weapons alone, not to mention other industries. This chapter will therefore make no pretension to being complete, nor will a survey of any particular area be attempted; the material will be taken now from one, now from another tribe, as the interest of the subject or the chances of our information direct. Although the Australian has learnt to use metals, in his native state he was guiltless of any acquaintance with them. His knives, his axes, his spearheads were of stone, bone, shell, or wood. The manufacture of stone implements has always been a great feature in the culture of peoples unacquainted with metals, and the Australian is no exception to this rule. Among the Arunta the stone axe takes days rather than hours to make. First a large, rounded, diorite pebble is taken; then with

a lump of quartz the workman removes fairly large chips, bringing the stone down to something like the proposed dimensions. This done, a rounded pebble of quartzite is brought into requisition, and for a day or even two, he will sit, probably upon his heels, and patiently tap away, hour after hour, at the surface, taking off small flakes, until no sign of the original rough working is left. Then one of the nardoo mills, blocks of stone which are brought long distances, sometimes on the backs of women, for grinding seeds, is brought into use as a grindstone. With sand and water the axe is rubbed down until the surfaces are smooth; next comes the hafting; a withy is made and bent round the blunt portion of the stone till it holds it tightly; then the two halves of the withy are joined half-way down with two pieces of grass or other string. The next operation is to squeeze a lump of softened porcupine grass resin in between the haft and the stone; this done, a fire-stick smooths down the resin, and nothing more remains than to decorate the haft with red ochre. In other tribes the haft is more often bound just below the axe-head, which may be grooved in the centre to give the withy more hold; the withy may also be crossed before it is tied, to make the grip surer, or the whole may be covered with gum. The axe is not a recognised weapon, though of course it would be used on occasion; its usual function was to cut notches in trees for climbing, to cut open trees wherein are concealed an opossum, honey, or other booty, to take off sheets of bark for canoes, to shape the wood for shields, and so on.

Turned in the opposite direction the stone axe becomes an adze, and is then used for hollowing out wooden vessels. A knife set in a haft forms a pick, and all sorts of flakes are used as scrapers; they have also saw-like implements in the form of a row of fragments set in a handle of gum. Stone hammers are made, without flaking, and fitted into handles like axe-hafts; pounders are employed for breaking hard seeds; with the nardoo mills or grinding stones we are already acquainted. A curious thing about the lower stone of these mills is, that there is only one quarry for a large area in Queensland; the position of this is kept a secret by the old men, for the stones are valuable articles of commerce. It is reported to be on the Georgina River; the material is sandstone, and it is said to be removed from the natural rock by fire and then split with bone pegs. It is an oval slab, some eighteen inches long, which after use shows two longitudinal depressions along which the rubber has been moved backwards and forwards in grinding. As already mentioned, these slabs are carried immense distances on the backs of women.

Somewhat rare perhaps is a stone drill; but they are made and used in the same way as the fire drill.

Before leaving the subject of stone implements it may be mentioned that, according to some authorities, the tribes which had no suitable stone within its own boundaries was at liberty to send tribal messengers to a quarry and procure what they wanted without molestation. On the other hand, we hear of private

ownership of quarries at which axes were procured, but possibly customs differed.

Teeth are occasionally used as scrapers, knives, and drills, but as a rule shells are more important items in the aboriginal tool-chest. They may be used for cutting hair or bark; for making adzes, when they are fixed in a handle of gum, hafted with wood; for making body scars or keloids, or for drills. Mussel shells were important implements in Victoria in working the opossum skins. On the Tully River a snail shell was ground down to act as a spokeshave, not of course for use with wood, but in order to slice *Cycas* nut or some other fruit which needed to be cut thin; the whorl of the shell was ground off close behind the opening; the shell in use was held in the hand between the thumb and second finger, the sharp edge turned backwards, so that it had to be drawn towards the body; in this position a slice of any desired thickness could be taken off.

Awls are made of the leg bone of an emu or kangaroo; they are ground down and serve, amongst other things, to pick out the concavity for the peg of the wommera which is described in the chapter on weapons; the women had a stiletto or needle for piercing holes in skins, or the edges of bark which they sew into canoes, or for piercing the septum of the nose for the reception of the nose-pin or feather (Pl. XII.).

As water-carriers a number of objects were used. A *Melo* shell is a very common pail in the districts in which it is found; it is of course traded for considerable distances. In some parts it is used as a cooking-

pot, but it is not certain that this use has not been derived from the Europeans. Under this head may be mentioned the use of *Melo* or nautilus shells as spoons. When water has to be conveyed long distances, the skin of an animal is a natural method of preserving it; kangaroo, opossum, or dingo skins serve in this capacity. They are taken off, the neck being cut through high up and the forepaws cut off close to the body; then it is tanned with coolibar gum, the various openings are closed by transfixion with a peg which is wound round with twine or tendon; the two hind-legs are tied together to serve as handles; the whole is carried in the hand or may be slung over the shoulder.

Bark vessels are made of excrescences or of pieces of bark cut in the shape of a canoe, or something like trays, or perhaps, rather, punts. These pitchis sometimes serve as cradles. Wooden troughs also serve the purpose of water-carriers and are manufactured by men only. They are carried on the head or slung at the level of the hip; spilling is prevented by strewing leaves on the top, which also serves to reduce the loss by evaporation. Sheath stalks of palm-leaves are used as pails; so are rolled-up leaves where the distance is short. The gourd is found in North Queensland, and in North Australia water-tight baskets are the means of transporting water.

Fish hooks are made of various materials, as will be seen in the chapter of fishing. Dr. Roth describes the process of manufacture of one from a shell. 'The operator chipped round and round the valve between

two stones until he succeeded in breaking it down to a more or less circular plate about 2 inches in diameter with rough uneven edges. He next placed two pointed pieces of hard wood on the fire, and as soon as their sharpened ends were burned and charred, put the smouldering extremities close to the centre of the shell plate, and blowing upon them with no inconsiderable force, caused the flame to play only upon its very centre, which was thus rendered comparatively brittle. But little difficulty was then experienced in breaking through, at this point, with a pencil of white coral; the hole once made, became gradually enlarged into the required oval by filing backwards and forwards with the coral, which at very frequent intervals was dipped into water to assist in the grinding. The uneven outer edge of the hook so produced was next gradually ground into shape until the desired width of hook was produced. The final processes consisted in grinding its middle very carefully up and down on a sharp vertical edge of rock until a break was obtained, then finishing off with the rock and coral file into the completed crescentic form.' Then the line is bound on the hook and it is ready for use.

Equally ingenious is the manufacture of the tortoise-shell fish hook. A more or less irregular piece of shell is wedged from the scutum; this is ground down on a piece of stone and finally finished off with a shell scraper, so as to produce a headless pin some $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, which tapers to a fine point. This end is then inserted in a piece of wood standing vertically on the ground, and sloping against the tortoise-shell pin is

placed another piece of wood, which is loosely tied to the upright to prevent it from slipping off. Then a fire is lighted, and as the pin gets warm it softens and bends into a gentle curve; then it is taken from its socket, and alternately cooled in water and heated at the fire, being moulded in the meantime in the fingers. The final result is in the shape of a *t* without the cross. On the Palm Islands the simpler method of heating a pebble in the fire and bending the pin across it is used; but, as Dr. Roth remarks, it is certainly curious that the natives do not use boiling water.

Of minor implements may be noticed swabs of grass for mopping up honey, head pads of bark for use when heavy weights are carried, strainers for filtering yam mush, etc., prodders for feeling after the occupants of opossum's holes, grub hooks for extracting them from trees, sheaths for knives, bark sandals, and many others.

The woman's digging stick will be mentioned more than once; it varies from two to four feet long, and broadens out at one end.

It will be seen from many of the descriptions above that gum is an important item in native life. It is obtained from spinifex, grass-tree, brown cedar and other trees, but undergoes little preparation. Beeswax is used for some purposes in the same way as gum; for fixing down on the body on ceremonial occasions human blood is often the means employed. The Brisbane blacks used a sort of clay in the early days for mending their water vessels; it was also used for caulking boats, and became so hard that it could only

be dug out with a hammer and chisel; in the account from which this statement is taken it is not clear whether the natives used it for their own canoes as well as European boats.

For decorative purposes white, red, yellow, and black pigments were in use. The first named was made from kaolin, carbonate of lime, or sulphate of lime. Some half-dozen oxides of iron, commonly called ochre, were the usual red pigments, but sulphide of mercury is reported to have been used at Brisbane. For yellow, ochre was again the common material, but a kind of toadstool is said to have supplied colouring matter to the Brisbane blacks, and the yellow strips of a kind of bark are also used for decorative effects. For black, charcoal is everywhere used; exceptionally oxide of manganese serves the same purpose.

Barks and roots were or are in use for producing colouring matter with which to stain manufactured articles, especially bags. The pigments might be moistened in the mouth; or human blood, iguana fat or gum cement might serve as media for fixing them.

Blue decoration is occasionally seen on weapons, but it seems to be a white man's colour; it was, however, in use as a mourning colour. One of the early voyagers mentions the use of green, but we have no information as to the source of this pigment.

It has sometimes been maintained by Dr. Semon that the Australian blacks have no words save for white and black; but this is clearly erroneous. Colour-blindness is probably rare, but, like many other peoples, the natives have no names for many colours, such as

green, apart from green objects. Brown, blue, black and green all receive the same name in one or two tribes which have been tested; but they can certainly distinguish between these colours.

The Australian makes use of cord or string in the decoration of his body, for nets of all kinds, the use of which will be described in Chapter VI., for fishing-lines, for the making of weapons, for the highly important industries of bag- and basket-making, in the manufacture of sewn bark canoes; in fact, string is more indispensable to him in daily life than it is to ourselves. The material may be animal or vegetable; the animal products employed for this purpose include human, opossum, and kangaroo hair, kangaroo and emu tendons, and sometimes tendons from the neck of a snake.

In the manufacture of hair-twine a spindle is employed; this is a piece of wood about eight inches long, to which is attached a short hook, either naturally or by means of a piece of string. The hair is cut off short; it undergoes no preliminary preparation, but it must be dry. The operator is usually a woman, and squats in the usual position; the hair is taken in the palm of the left hand, having been previously teased out, and the spindle is held in the right; with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand a small portion of hair is drawn out of the left hand, but not separated from the mass, and this is entwined with the free end of the spindle string, if there is one; then the spindle is placed on the outside of the right thigh near the knee and rolled backwards with the hand, the left thumb at the same time rolling the hair in the opposite

direction. The hair strand is kept as taut as possible and fed from the bundle in the palm of the left hand. As the strand grows longer, it is wound round the hook of the spindle; the first strand finished, a second spindle is taken and another strand made in the same way as before. These two strands are then intertwined to form the hair twine. This is done by knotting the two together and looping these two ends thus united once or twice round a stick; the string from one spindle is wound round the left wrist, and as the spinner moves backwards from the stick, she unwinds the strands both from the spindle and from the wrist. Then the other ends are tied together and made fast by the spindle string to the spindle; this done, she rolls the strands together with spindle and hand, exactly as she originally formed the single strand.

The vegetable products in use are the stems, leaves, or bark of plants, or the complete plants. Some forty plants or trees are used in one of these ways, *Calamus* (lawyer cane or vine) being specially important in the first class, *Pandanus* in the second, *Melaleuca*, *Sterculia*, and *Livistona* in the third. Bulrush fibre was very important in South Australia and Victoria.

The preparation of the twine involved two processes, first the preparation of the fibre, and second the manufacture of the string.

The fibre is prepared by chewing it or soaking it in water; the subsequent spinning into twine is accomplished more simply than is the case with hair twine; the strand is manufactured by simply rolling the fibre on the thigh; then it is doubled in two, and rolled backwards

and forwards, with the result that the two halves are rolled in different directions. Then the portion nearest the free end is unravelled and rolled so as to give it the same twist as the portion already finished; all fibre twine is two-ply in Queensland, where this process has been observed by Dr. Roth.

The methods of joining the ends of pieces of twine or tendon are various; splicing may be resorted to, the process being exactly the same as that used in inserting new strands in fibre twine. The end may be made fast by bringing it underneath, just as in binding a cricket bat, where it is not necessary to continue the work. Granny, slip, and other knots are made. Pandanus leaf is joined up in a very ingenious manner, the leaves being split and the tags passed through and tied up. Finally, gum of some sort may be used to join two ends or to strengthen other kinds of joins.

According to Dr. Roth, the processes by which twine is worked up into other articles include plait-work, chain-work, overknotting, fringing, winding, lacing, top-stitching.

Plait-work is used for necklaces, basket handles, and armlets; but in some parts the boys only make it, so that it must be regarded in the light of 'play-work.' Chain-work is used in Queensland for making mourners' armlets. By overknotting, Dr. Roth means a method of mending bark or other vessels, when they have begun to split. Pairs of holes are pierced on either side of this portion to be repaired, and string passed through them and knotted on the outside, the free end of the string being in each case held by the succeeding

knot, so as to prevent it from getting loose. The process of making fringes has already been described in connection with clothing; winding and lacing are processes sufficiently explained by the names.

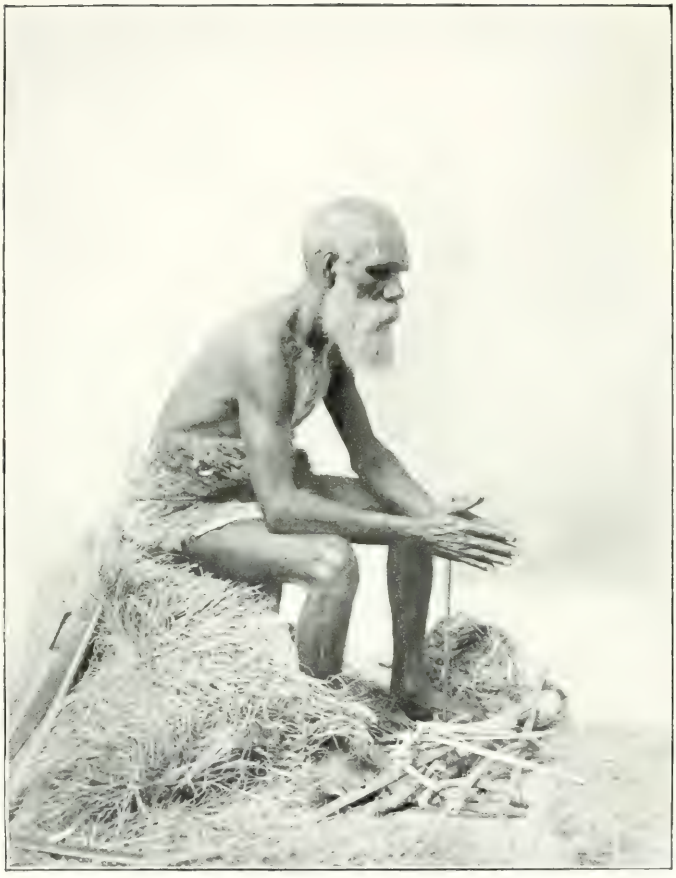
In Australia, baskets, bags, and nets are indistinguishable, when we regard only the process of manufacture, and they may be treated together here. As a rule, the cord is continuous, being joined in one of the ways mentioned above; but it may also be finished off with a knot for decorative purposes and a fresh beginning made. As a preliminary step, a cord may be stretched between two posts, or they may employ a stirrup, as we do in Europe; Dr Roth distinguishes these as straight or circular basal strands or cords.

In addition to the variations caused by the basal cord, we may have continuous or non-continuous cords in the body of the work, or two continuous cords, or one of each. The pattern may be simple loop, loop and twist, double loop or netting stitch; with two continuous cords a chain twist is sometimes found. Many different types of baskets are found in Australia; the Yarra tribe had one in shape just like the rush basket in which fish or game are sometimes carried; another type was rather wallet-shaped, with a fairly long handle; a third Yarra bag was four inches deep by twelve long, and could be stretched with ease. All over the southern parts of Australia a flat basket was in use, made of a round body with the opening on one side, on the top of which came a circular neck with a handle. Large round baskets were used in Gippsland, with or without handles, in shape like a cheese. On

the Burdekin River the basket was sometimes deep and comparatively narrow, with a long strap-handle. At Rockingham Bay one was in use which closely resembles in appearance a decanter with a handle over the mouth. In the interior of Queensland a cigar-shaped pouch, with a small mouth on one side, is used for carrying pituri. According to Lumholtz, a large basket is used in North Queensland for carrying children in ; it has one small handle on one side of the opening. According to Lumholtz, they are sometimes carried with a browband, so that the hands are free for other purposes. A small basket is also carried round the neck on the Herbert River ; only the men plait baskets, which are extremely decorative, many of them being ornamented with human blood or pigments.

In South Australia the Narrinyeri tribe made flat open baskets, the last two being provided with lids. They also made large circular mats worn on the back ; these were of grass, and the pattern was not inartistic.

Grey has given a list of the contents of a West Australian woman's bag ; besides the articles enumerated, the woman would possibly carry a child in the bag or on her shoulders. The collection was as follows : a flat stone to pound roots with ; earth to mix with the pounded roots ; quartz to make spears and knives ; stones for hatchets ; prepared cakes of gum for making and mending weapons ; kangaroo sinews for sewing and for binding spears ; needles of kangaroo shin-bones ; opossum hair for belts ; shavings of kangaroo skins for polishing spears ; mussel shell for hair cutting ; knives ; axe ; pipeclay ; red ochre ; yellow



Clarence River Man using Fire-Drill

ochre ; paper bark to carry water in ; waist-bands and spare ornaments; pieces of quartz said to have been extracted by doctors from their patients, which they preserve like relics ; *Banksia* cones or pieces of fungus for use as tinder or to carry fire from place to place ; grease, when they can procure it from a whale; finally, roots which they have collected during the day. In addition they have spare weapons which the husband does not wish to carry, skin in course of preparation for cloaks and other articles.

In connection with domestic matters we are naturally led to consider the use and procuring of fire. Some facts as to cooking will be given in the chapter on food.

More than one author has recorded that there are tribes in South Australia which are acquainted with fire, but have no means of producing it. If they are so unfortunate as to let the fire go out or to omit to preserve a spark in the fire-stick, they have, so it is said, to send to the Murray natives to beg for a light. Probably the tribes referred to have long since perished or got lucifer-matches, and it is now impossible to authenticate the statement. But, taken in connection with the numerous myths of the origin of fire, it may, if true, be taken to show that at no very remote period the Australians were ignorant of how to produce fire, though they could use it when they had it. This must mean that they were originally ignorant of fire, and emphasises the argument for the long isolation of the Australians from the rest of the world.

There are two main methods of producing fire in use

in Australia, both depending on the production of heat by friction. These are known as the 'drill' and the 'saw'; their distribution is curious and anomalous; the drill is used by the more southern central tribes and those lying in the direction of Queensland; by most of the Queensland tribes and almost universally in New South Wales. The saw, of which two forms are found, is used by the Urabunna and the more northern central tribes, on the Lower Murray and the Lachlan, on the Georgina River. Curiously enough the saw in almost the identical form is in use in lands to the north of Australia, and it is a very difficult problem whether it was originally introduced into the continent or independently invented.

There are various methods of drilling, but it will suffice to describe one of them. Captain Cook gives the following account: 'To produce fire they take two pieces of dry soft wood; one is a stick about eight or nine inches long, the other piece is flat; the stick they shape into an obtuse point at one end, and pressing it upon the other, turn it nimbly by holding it between both their hands, as we do a chocolate mill, often shifting their hands up and then moving them down upon it, to increase the pressure as much as possible. By this method they get fire in less than two minutes.'

In other cases two similar thin wands are used, but the method is the same. A European would entirely fail to get fire in this way, as any one can discover by simple experiment, if he does not mind blistering his hands.

In the saw, on the other hand, the movable piece is laid horizontally on the second piece. In many cases the second piece is a shield and the other a spear-thrower, the latter of hard, the former of soft wood. The shield, like the under piece in the drill, is held firmly on the ground by means of the feet, and the wommera is drawn vigorously over the shield, backwards and forwards, by two men. A groove soon results, and the fine powder which is separated off begins to smoulder, and by careful blowing a flame is produced in the dry tinder in which it is placed.

A second method is in use among the Worgaia, in the Belyando district, on the Lachlan and the Lower Murray; a piece of stick, often an old branch, is cleft, and a chip or a stone inserted as a wedge. In the fork thus produced is inserted some dry grass or other tinder. The stick is then fixed against a small stake firmly driven into the ground, by the feet of the operator, and he saws across the split portion of the branch; the heated dust falls among the tinder, and a flame is quickly produced. It is this method which is in use in the area to the north of Australia; but the singular distribution of this form of the saw in Australia makes it very difficult to assume that it was introduced from without.

In a work not intended to form a complete survey of the material culture of the Australians it may seem superfluous to have a chapter on clothing, for in many tribes clothing can hardly be said to exist; where something of the nature is found, it is not always what we should term clothing. The Arunta dress is coloured

white for corroborees ; it is sometimes as large as a five-shilling piece, sometimes much smaller, and consists of opossum fur string. Further to the north the tassel is really large enough to serve a practical purpose, and these tribes have also developed a waist-belt to which it is attached. On the north-west coast a large shell, curiously ornamented with lines, takes the place of the tassel. On the Gulf of Carpentaria the tassel is replaced by a fringe apron in the case of a woman. In the Boulia district the tassel reappears together with the shell ; but their use is confined to corroborees. A girdle or waist-cord is also worn on these occasions, and very commonly in other parts of Australia ; the men usually wear it permanently ; it is made of human hair, sometimes of opossum hair, and is said to measure three hundred yards in length sometimes ; a short one measured by Dr. Roth was twenty-six yards in length. It is worn continuously for months at a time, and serves to suspend eagle-hawk feathers and other corroboree ornaments in the case of the men. A bark belt is worn by males only at corroboree time and by females at all times ; it differs from the cord just described in passing once only round the body ; according to Roth, its use is not unattended with discomfort, as it requires some force to get it on.

The Victorian natives and those of the south generally had more clothing. As an apron were worn pieces of skin cut into strips save the band at top which held the pieces together ; this was double, being worn both before and behind. The young women wore an opossum fur apron, and at the corroboree an emu

Victoria River Women (p. 64)

feather apron; this was made by attaching feathers, six or more together, by sinews, cord, or fibre, to a girdle of kangaroo tail sinew; the feathers were long, and the apron hung from the waist to half-way down the thigh. In South Australia the women had large, mat-like cloaks on their backs, from out of which their children peeped when they were young. In South Queensland Lumholtz records that they had a sort of cape of bark cloth, and Eyre found them using seaweed as a dress on the south coast. The commonest article of clothing, however, was the opossum skin rug; in winter the Victorian males, who wore only the apron in summer, took to a kangaroo skin rug, which was also the covering of the women in wet weather. In addition to these there were or are a number of ornaments in use.

The hair itself was sometimes left in its natural state, save that it was singed or cut off with a mussel shell. Other tribes made it into a cone-shaped chignon, into the construction of which reeds entered; others again rolled the hair into little thrums like a mop; and in the case of those who left the hair in its natural state, much the same effect was produced by the masses of *wilgi* or red ochre and other substances with which they plastered it. As a rule, men let their hair grow long and women keep it short. In the centre of Australia it is a common practice for the men to pull out the hair above the forehead, making the latter appear abnormally high.

One of the commonest head ornaments is the head net; its use is to keep the hair back. Dr. Roth describes the Queensland net as about a foot long and

two inches broad; the individual mesh is only about one-eighth of an inch broad and, though no needle is used, the network is wonderfully regular; for its manufacture human hair, flax, or opossum twine is used, in the latter case with a correspondingly larger mesh. In the place of the net is also used the fillet, which may be formed of eight strands of opossum twine, closely apposed and bound together with four ties. In the Arunta tribe the headband is a simple cord; to this may be attached tail tips of the rabbit, bandicoot, kangaroo teeth, and other objects. A remarkable form of ornamentation is found among the Arunta as a pendant to one of the broader headbands, of somewhat more complicated construction than usual. From the ends of the band, where the loops issue from it, to which are attached the strings which fasten it to the head, hang two small masses of wax terminating in artificial flowers of excellent workmanship, made of small brown feathers with a centre of down.

Another not uncommon method of decorating the head is by means of aigrettes of emu, eagle-hawk, and other feathers, worn behind the net or fillet; kangaroo and dingo bones, teeth, human and animal (Pls. XI., XII.), shells, and other objects are fixed to the hair with gum, or used as forehead ornaments; and artificial sidelocks are actually in use among Mitakoodi women and little boys. Hair is attached to a foundation of beefwood gum, and this is made fast to the hair of the head in front of the ear, hanging some two inches below the jaw. For the beard teeth decorations were in use and a dingo's tail must have been an effective

ETHERIDGE RIVER MAN (p. 66)

ornament. In Central Australia it is the custom to pull out the beard, hair by hair.

Many different kinds of necklaces are in use: among the Arunta the men wear simple bands ornamented with bones, bandicoot tails, etc.; other pendants are eagle-hawk and lyre bird claws, kangaroo teeth, shells, lobster antennæ, crab claws, tassels, etc. Reed necklaces are very common, formed of short pieces strung on fibre or hair (Pls. XI., XII.); they are sometimes thirty feet in length. Opossum string necklaces are found in Queensland, formed of a single stout string with some dozens of secondary strings as fringe, which are really formed of one continuous string twisted on itself and round the main string to produce the appearance of a fringe. Another kind of necklace worn by men on the west coast of the Gulf might also be termed a chest band; part of it is bound so as to form a single thick roll; this is worn vertically between the shoulders; the rest is either separate strands or bound into two cords for part of the distance; these pass over the shoulders and round the neck.

Armbands of various kinds are worn; a simple form is made of split cane, bound with fur string. The Mara are more decorative; they use cockatoo feathers or the bright red, yellow, and green feathers of the mountain parakeet. Sometimes these ornaments have a magical purpose; though, as a rule, we hear little of anything but decorative effect in Australia, the Victorian blacks used the skin of a small squirrel as a means of acquiring strength. Other forms of armlet are of hair, human or animal.

Besides the chest ornament mentioned above, various claws and shells are in use as pendants. Among inland tribes and those remote from the source of the more beautiful shells, these objects are highly valued. Mrs. Langloh Parker tells me that the natives of the Euahlayi tribe came to look at a shell in the same way that more civilised peoples flock to look at crown-jewels and the like.

Anklets are common forms of ornament at the corroboree, but otherwise rare. An important ornament, which is, however, rather magical than decorative in its intention, is the nose-pin—a piece of bone, or a feather worn through the septum of the nose, sometimes permanently, sometimes only on special occasions. Few Australian tribes were without it; in some cases it was regarded as decorative and intended to impress the fair sex. The ear-cylinder (Pl. v.) is rare.

Another form of adornment or mutilation may be mentioned here, though we shall return to it later in the chapter on initiation ceremonies. This is the custom of knocking out one or more teeth. It can hardly be doubted that this practice has had an important influence on the languages of Australia.

The Australian native is in the habit of smearing himself with oil at all times; for corroborees, mourning, or war he prepares himself by painting his body with white, red, yellow, or black pigment. For corroborees and ceremonial purposes down and feathers are also employed. The extraordinary diversity of decorative effects makes it impossible to describe in detail any number of these modes of ornamenting the body; one

BARWON RIVER MAN (p. 68)

or two may be selected. In the Boulia district, in intertribal warfare, the warrior's face was entirely covered with kopi (gypsum), which also formed three wide bands on his upper and lower limbs; it was applied in the form of a boomerang from each shoulder to the waist-belt, and there can be little doubt that the primary object was to ensure recognition. In addition to this, the leaders wore a head-dress stuffed with grass, in which were several shags' feathers; the ordinary warriors had down on their heads, stuck on with mud. The corroboree decoration will be described later. For mourning, it was sometimes the custom to blacken the face; this is widely found, and may probably be explained as an attempt to puzzle or deceive the spirit of the dead man, who will thus be compelled to leave his relatives in peace. In Finnegan's account of a fight at Moreton Bay, it is said that the chief was covered with beeswax and charcoal; this was probably simply a compliment from a friend; a more common war-paint was red. As a rule, it is only the men who are painted; but Angas records that the girls were sometimes decorated with red pigment, and Lumholtz records that in Queensland the women were decorated, though less so than the men.

CHAPTER V

ARTS AND CRAFTS (*continued*)

Huts. Arrangement of camp. Salutations. Weapons: boomerang, club, spear, wommera, etc. Canoes: raft, bark, dug-out, outrigged canoe.

THE Australian native is commonly represented as possessing no permanent habitation, hardly anything, in fact, which can be called a hut. This is not even true of Victoria, still less of the natives of more northerly districts, who found themselves in need of protection against the rain more than the natives in the south needed shelter from the cold of winter. The prevailing type in the south is or was the bark hut, or rather breakwind, formed by sheets of bark arched over, or by boughs or both. This afforded little shelter, but the open side was turned round so that it was away from the wind, thus sheltering the fire, which stood on the same side, and allowing the wind to drive the smoke away. In Queensland they are of leaves (Pl. XIII.).

In West Australia the huts were constructed in less than half an hour by a couple of women. They are usually of grass-tree (*Xanthorrhœa arborea*), but paper-bark (*Melaleuca*) was also used. On arriving on the camping-ground, the women set to work to collect bundles of dead flowering stems, six or seven feet long, from the grass-trees in the neighbourhood. Then

Native Camp, N. Queensland (p. 70)

making holes in the ground with their yam-sticks, they planted the stems in them to a depth of some eight inches; the holes were larger at the bottom than at the top, and ten inches apart, in the form of a horse-shoe, the heel being the doorway. The stems were made to converge, and on them were placed withered, curled grass-tree rushes, which were held in position by the hard-pointed seed-vessels of the stems. The framework was now ready, and the women proceeded to gather bundles of green, straight grass-tree rushes; holding them under the left arm they threw them with the right hand at an angle of 45°, so that when the sharp points stuck among the covering of dead rushes, the weight of the green stems caused them to bend down and remain in their places. The thatching was begun at the ground and continued up to the top, where a second layer was put on, to render the roof water-tight. When the heat of the sun had been on it for a few hours, the roof settled down and became smooth; a third coating of rushes was then put on, and the roof was good for many months, only the top requiring to be renewed. Although the huts were so substantially built, the natives never returned to them, after once going away.

On the Hutt River Grey found more substantial dwellings still, evidently intended for permanent habitation, for in the neighbourhood were large yam grounds; this was one of the few areas in which anything like real cultivation of the ground was found among the aborigines. The huts were larger and plastered over with clay and sods.

In the direction of Hanover Bay Grey found an even better type ; it was built of logs of wood, in shape like a beehive, about four feet high and nine feet in diameter. Probably the huts found by Peron at Shark's Bay were of this type ; they were sixteen feet long and carpeted with seaweed; in the walls were recesses for storing implements; the entrances were about three feet high.

Somewhat similar huts were in use in Victoria. Eyre found a village of thirteen huts near Mount Napier ; they were cupola-shaped, made of a strong wood frame covered with thick turf, the grassy sides inwards ; some were semicircular, some had two entrances ; one was ten feet by fifteen, and so strong that a man could ride over it. At Port Fairy similar erections were found, some large enough for twelve people, and higher than most of the native huts ; they were six feet high, and had a door of bark. In the roof was an aperture nine inches in diameter for the smoke to escape, which in wet weather was covered with a sod. Were it not that this information was received from an early settler, it would be probable that the natives had profited by European example; as it is, the type is not so far removed from those already described that a foreign origin must necessarily be ascribed to these Port Fairy huts.

The highest type of all, the native character being, however, uncertain, was found by King at Careening Bay. It was situated on a hill, and formed of two walls of stone, three feet high, with saplings across at each end, thatched with bark and grass ; but we

cannot be certain that it was not built by Europeans or Malays. Other authors, however, describe circular stone erections in North-West Australia.

Of a different type from the Port Fairy huts, but equally permanent, were those seen by Eyre at White Lake in latitude 36° 40′. These were circular, made of straight rods meeting at a central, upright pole; the outside was first covered with bark and grass, then coated with clay. The fire was in the centre, and the smoke hole was made in the roof. On the Gwydir Mitchell saw another type of a slighter construction, but remarkable for having a conical roof with a portico on one side supported on two sticks.

Collins describes a hut at Shoal Bay made of vine tendrils crossing each other, lashed with wiry grass. The walls were of *Melaleuca* bark, and the hut was weather proof; it was eight feet in diameter, and four and a half feet high; the entrance was by a small avenue with a turn in it, and fires were lighted inside. One was large enough for fifteen persons.

These large huts were, of course, intended for more than one family, or were for the accommodation of the unmarried youths and men. Eyre says that on the Lower Murray there were huts for eight or ten families, and a bachelors' hut for eight or ten persons.

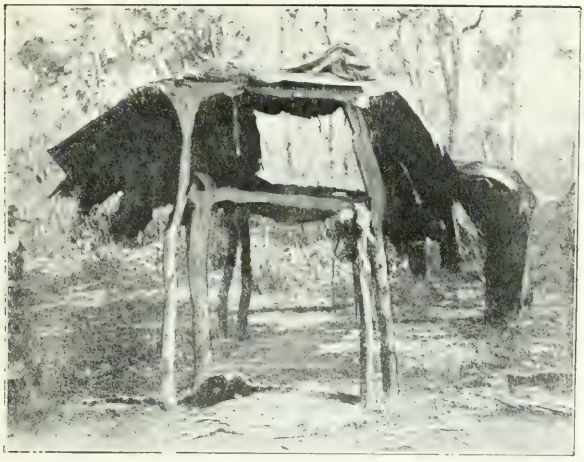
At Moreton Bay another type was found, formed of three sticks meeting at the top, which were covered with *Melaleuca* bark. It was only large enough for one family, and they slept in a semicircular position on bark, covering themselves with skins. Somewhat similar are the Boulia district huts described by Roth.

Bent saplings are fixed in the earth, and the tops interlocked at a height of four feet or more; against these lean secondary sticks, and the interstices are filled with light bushes and grass; over this comes another layer of bushes; they are circular and sometimes have two entrances. From the Lynd River is described a two-storied hut (cf. Pl. XIV.). Four large poles were rammed into the ground, and on them were placed cross poles; on the top of the poles was a layer of bark, and over this again was an arched layer of stringy bark. The upper part was intended for use in the rainy season.

At Cape York Jukes found an inferior type, formed of bark arched over a frame of sticks, fifteen feet long, four feet wide, and three feet high in the middle. Shorter constructions of the same sort were in use at Port Essington.

The Bathurst Island huts were gigantic compared with those of the south of Australia. Stout poles, fourteen to sixteen feet high, were brought together at the top; over them came a stout thatching of dried grass. Near the Roper River the huts are said to have small openings as windows.

The camps were arranged on well-understood principles. In Victoria, when several tribes met, the huts were grouped according to the tribe of the builders, each hut five or six yards from its neighbour, and the groups twenty yards apart. The Bangerang built their huts twenty feet apart; and at Snodgrass Lagoon Mitchell found the village disposed round one large hut—perhaps the chief's—in the shape of a semicircle. The Central Australian tribes camp phratry-



TWO-STORIED HUT AT WEIPA (p. 74)

N. QUEENSLAND CANOE (p. 86)

wise; the southern men also camp to the south, and the northern to the north. The arrangement of the camp according to phratries and classes is important, because ceremonial rules regulate the access of the various classes to each other, and these could not be carried out if the huts were disposed irregularly.

In South-East Australia the positions of the huts were determined by regular rules, which varied in different tribes. In the Wurunjerri a man camped with his wife and child on the east; just north of him was his brother; some distance to the west his father and mother; twice as far away in the same direction were his wife's father and mother; and forming a triangle with the two latter was the young men's camp; visitors camped south-west of the first family, equidistant from them and the third pair.

Among the Kurnai, however, a man and his wife were on the west; five paces north-north-east from them was his married son; ten paces south-east, close together, his wife's married brother, and his father's sister, if she were married; twice as far away north-east were his father and mother and his married brother, only a short distance apart; nearly a hundred yards away were the wife's father and mother, and her married brother.

In some parts all the huts faced in the same direction away from the wind; on the Herbert River they were arranged so that each commanded a view of an entrance to the camp.

It has already been mentioned that there was a bachelors' camp. Some tribes had also a spinsters'

camp; the old women undertook the duty of supervision.

In connection with camping customs we may naturally consider the greetings offered to new arrivals, whether travellers returned home or casual visitors.

Curious customs of greeting prevail in most parts of Australia. We have already seen that boughs are waved as a sign of peaceable intentions; the reception of messengers has also been described. When an ordinary man reached home in West Australia he proceeded straight to the hut of some relative or intimate friend, bestowing not even a glance on others which he passed. When he got there he sat down at the fire; his wives, if any accompanied him, crouching behind, keeping their eyes fixed on the ground. In about ten minutes the nearest blood relation of any one who had died during the wanderer's absence advanced and seated himself cross-legged on his thighs, pressing his breast to that of the newcomer. After a few minutes he retires, having kept perfect silence the whole time; then the nearest female relative approached and threw herself on her knees before him; she embraced his knees with her left arm, and with her right hand scratched her cheek till blood came; this she repeated with his wife, and they both cried and wailed. This done, the returned wanderer was at liberty to speak, and one of the men in camp related to him the events which had happened since he left.

In other cases there was less formality; but strangers were required to sit down outside until they were requested to come nearer. Probably many Europeans

THROWING THE BOOMERANG (p. 77)

met their death in the early days from neglecting to observe native rules of politeness.

The friendly reception by visitors naturally leads up to the question of war and weapons. If the general reader with some knowledge of Australia were asked to say what the most important weapon of the natives is, he would probably name the boomerang; but the return boomerang is not a weapon, and the non-return form, though in skilful hands it can be made to describe one or more circles, is not what is commonly meant by the term boomerang. None the less there is a certain amount of truth in the prominence thus given in most minds to the boomerang as representative of Australian culture; for though implements of similar shape were or are in use in ancient Egypt, America, and South India, it is open to question whether they were really of the return kind. If they were not, then Australia is the only area in which the boomerang proper exists.

The essential points of the boomerang are that it is a thin, curved piece of wood, the arms of which are slightly rotated about an axis passing through the centre. It is from two to three feet long, though non-return forms are much longer; and from Central Australia come huge specimens, six feet long. Holding a return boomerang concave side towards one, it is remarked that the upper surface is curved, the lower flat, or nearly so; both arms are rotated counter-clockwise, so that the inner edge of the left-hand and the outer edge of the right-hand arm are raised, and the opposite edges depressed below the plane through the middle of the arm. The non-return boomerang is

sometimes not skewed in this manner, and when it has a skew, it is in the opposite direction to that of the return boomerang.

The boomerang is thrown by taking it in the hand so that the curved side is to the left (Pl. XV.); holding it by the end, the thrower launches it with a quick swing, imparting as much rotation to it as possible. In skilful hands this will be ten or fifteen turns a second, so that the ends are not plainly visible, and it looks like a Catherine-wheel. After travelling fifty or more yards revolving in an upright direction, it turns over on the flat side, curves away to the left, and begins to rise in the air. The subsequent path varies with the thrower and the kind of boomerang; but an Australian will often make it describe three or four circles, rising 150 feet in the air, before it finally drops. When a good thrower is trying to make it come back, he will on a calm day drop it within a six-foot circle.

The circles are alternately from right to left and left to right, and it is very remarkable to see the way in which the boomerang will descend near the surface of the ground, and seem to have lost its impetus, and then taking a new lease of life, rise in the air again, and possibly endanger the heads of incautious spectators. Some kinds of boomerangs will not return unless they are made to strike the ground. Captain Bradshaw has described to me a throw in which it hits the ground thirty yards in front of the thrower, then thirty yards to the left, finally returning to his feet. Probably the boomerang will not return if it hits a bird or other object, though they do so sometimes.

One curious form of boomerang, the swan neck type, has a hook on the end on the convex side; the object of this is that when it is thrown at an enemy, and he endeavours to ward it off, the hook engaging the parrying stick, brings the boomerang round and makes his defence of no avail.

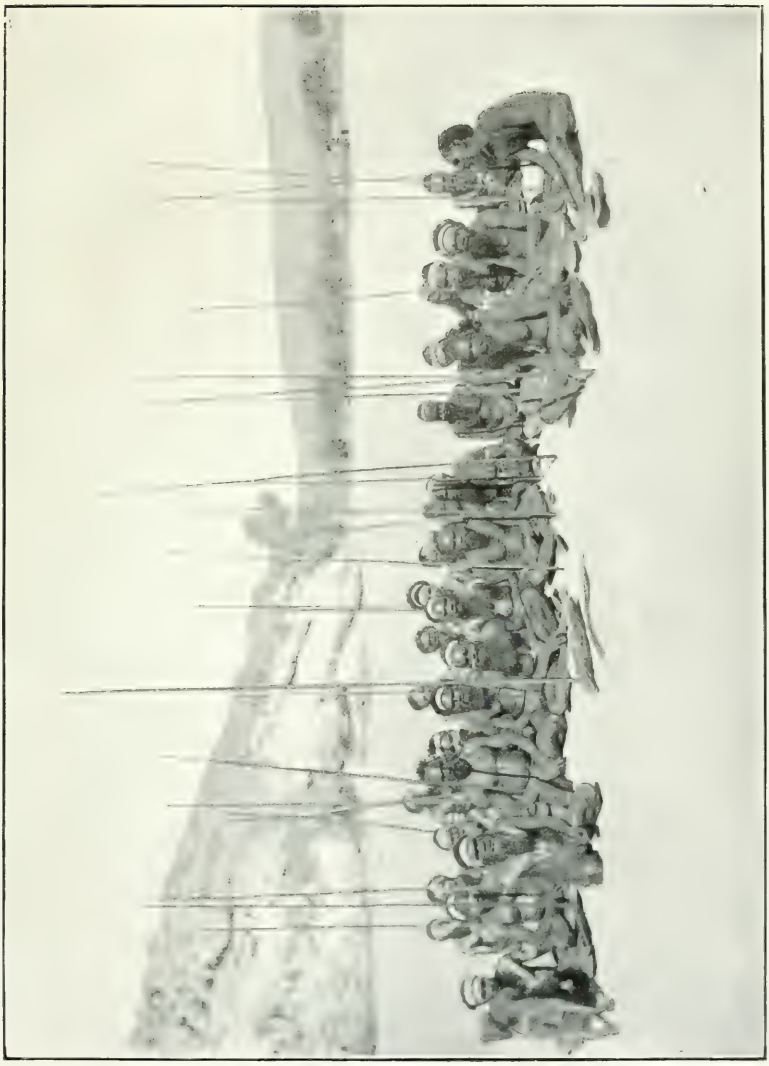
The ordinary war boomerang is thrown under the shield in a stooping position. It is sometimes made to strike the ground some twenty yards ahead of the thrower, and then flies some eighty yards further at the height of four feet.

The distance to which the return form can be thrown is a matter of much dispute. Howitt describes a throw of one hundred yards (estimated), but there can be no doubt that this has been exceeded. I have been informed by a resident at Coranderrk, that he has measured throws of one hundred and twenty yards, and seen throws of over one hundred and fifty yards. The war boomerang can probably be thrown two hundred and fifty yards or more. It is an effective weapon and will cut clean through the soft parts. The return form is in most tribes only a plaything; it is, however, used for throwing at birds. In West Australia the *kyli*, or fish boomerang, is in use, but no description of its flight has been published, so far as I know. First cousins to the boomerang, if we may judge by the transitional forms, are on one side the so-called swords in use in Queensland and North Australia, and, on the other, the missile clubs and hand clubs, of which there are numerous varieties all over Australia. Some missile sticks are straight, others

curved; some are round, others flattened; some, often called *waddies* or *nulla-nullas*, have heads, others are the same at each end.

The weapon called *kukluk* by the Kurnai is of the shape of a boomerang, but used like a sword-club, which indeed it resembles in having a well-marked handle. Another club, whose form approaches that of the boomerang, is the *leonile* or *langeel*, found in Victoria and Queensland; like one of the heavy clubs with conoid heads, it is only aimed at the head, any other kind of blow being deemed unfair. Besides these we find clubs with round heads, clubs with triangular heads, clubs with oval heads, clubs with serrated heads, and clubs with Y-shaped heads (Pl. XXVIII.). The women are usually restricted to the use of the digging-stick, four to five feet long; if one of the adversaries drops her weapon, the other will sling it away with her toes. Women also use a short club, two feet long, and very occasionally a missile weapon. The long stick is used like a quarter-staff in some cases, in others it is held by the end.

If the Australian has many clubs he has likewise no deficiency of spears. Among the central and northern tribes alone eleven different types can be counted; these are traded from tribe to tribe, and often wander far from their place of manufacture. Among these spears are the stone-headed, nine feet long, sometimes with composite shaft, which weighs about 1 lb.; where the shaft is partly of reed, the weight may be three ounces less, even when the length is greater; the wooden spear with one strong barb;



Aruṇta Warriors (p. 80)

the spear with many barbs on one side only or on both, all turned in the same direction ; the spear with barbs on one side, but half in one-half in the reverse direction ; in some forms the barbs stand out at right angles and are very numerous and small ; the spear with long, curved, double barbs ; the spear with barbs in two planes ; the spear with three or four prongs, often a fishing spear : the spear with wooden head, shaped to imitate stone ; the fishing spear with one sharp prong, and so on. Elsewhere we find spears with flints set in with gum to serve as barbs, lobster-claw spears for eels, and many forms which it would be tedious to enumerate in a non-technical work.

Many of the spears are thrown by hand ; but for others an implement (Pl. XVII.) called *wommera*, *amera*, or *mero* in various parts is employed ; this performs the function of an additional joint to the arm of the thrower, who is thus able to exert much more force. Spear-throwers of other types are found in other parts of the world; the distinguishing characteristic of the Australian type is that there is a peg at the proximal end, which holds the spear, whereas the Eskimo form, to take another example, has a groove in which the spear lies ; this peg fits into a small hole in the spear.

There are many different forms in use in Australia ; in Victoria and New South Wales the commonest is a flat, broad piece of wood with one end narrowed down to a handle ; these offer great resistance to the air, and we find another form especially among the central tribes ; this is the lath, a long, narrow piece of wood, sometimes four feet long ; others again are circular,

and of course thin pieces of wood, sometimes with a tassel on the end to give good handhold. More effective still is the Queensland and North Australian form, characterised by the small resistance it offers to the air; in shape it is not unlike the lath or Billetta wommera, but it is rotated through an angle of 90°, so that the peg is fixed not in the broad but in the narrow side.

According to some authorities the spear was thrown one hundred and fifty yards in Victoria, but the range naturally varied with the kind of spear; perhaps sixty yards was a more normal distance. Spencer says twenty-five yards is usual in Central Australia. Opinions differ much as to the accuracy possible with the spear; a German writer says that at King George's Sound the natives could hit a sixpence with the spear at thirty yards; others represent them as unable to hit a haystack at fifty yards. The longest spears seem to have been used in New South Wales, where they reached sixteen feet in length. The fish spears were often not more than four feet long.

Of minor importance as weapons were or are the knife, chiefly used in duels, when the combatants are locked body to body; the dagger of emu bone in South Australia; the strangling cord (Pl. XXXII.), which was rather a means of assassination; and, in the extreme north of Queensland, the bow and arrow.

Two kinds of shields are in use in Australia—spear-shields and club-shields (Pls. XXIV., XXV., XXVII.)—the latter being narrow, sometimes no more than two inches broad, but more often five or six; the former ten

THROWING THE SPEAR WITH THE *Womera*, N. QUEENSLAND (p. 82)

inches broad in some forms, and only a quarter of an inch thick, as against four inches in the club-shield. The spear-shields of West and Central Australia and the Boulia district are two or three feet long, oval, and have a shorter diameter of nine or ten inches; those of North Queensland have a central boss and a peculiar, irregular form; and those of Victoria a conoid shape, with points at each end.

From weapons we pass to canoes. The native of Australia is not a navigator. Such canoes as are capable of keeping the sea when the weather is unfavourable have come to him from New Guinea; those which we may regard as his own invention are both rude and fragile. It must not be supposed that he never goes to sea; it is recorded that the Port Jackson natives went out to sea to a distance of several miles, but as a rule the voyages were confined to landlocked harbours and rivers. In fact, from Adelaide westwards along the south coast and thence as far as Gascoyne River, not far from North-West Cape, there were absolutely no means of conveyance by water. Some authors go so far as to say that the natives could not even swim, but this is certainly not true of all parts in which boats or means of conveyance by water were wanting. From North-West Cape as far as Port Essington, and sporadically at other points, such as the south of the Gulf of Carpentaria, on Lake Alexandrina, etc., the main or only method of voyaging was by means of a raft. In its rudest shape this was simply a log on which a man sat, his legs in the water, and propelled himself with hands or feet.

A stage above this is the raft of several logs, which was sometimes simply a mangrove-tree of the right shape; on this one or more individuals sat and propelled themselves with paddles or spears. A form depicted by Saville-Kent shows the raftsman standing on a few branches, his feet in the water. More elaborate forms were composed of logs pegged together.

Apparently raft-like was a curious form of canoe (?) reported from Adelaide River, N.T., which was composed of several layers of bark to a depth of nine inches; one end was pointed, the other about four feet broad; it was sixteen feet long and large enough for ten persons. This must have borne some resemblance, so far as the bows are concerned, to the canoes of the now extinct Tasmanians.

Perhaps the commonest form of Australian canoe was the sheet of bark, carefully removed from the tree and shaped over the fire; the ends were then tied or sewn up, and sometimes caulked with mud. For temporary use this kind was very quickly completed, but where the canoe was expected to last for years, much care was shown in shaping it, and the processes, especially those of drying and hardening, took several days. The usual length did not exceed twelve or fourteen feet, but twenty feet has been recorded; eight or ten men was the utmost capacity of the large one, and the smallest were intended for a single individual. As a rule, they were for use on rivers only, the main area in which they are found being the Riverina, and the water frequently came within an inch or two of the

A Grave-mound in New South Wales

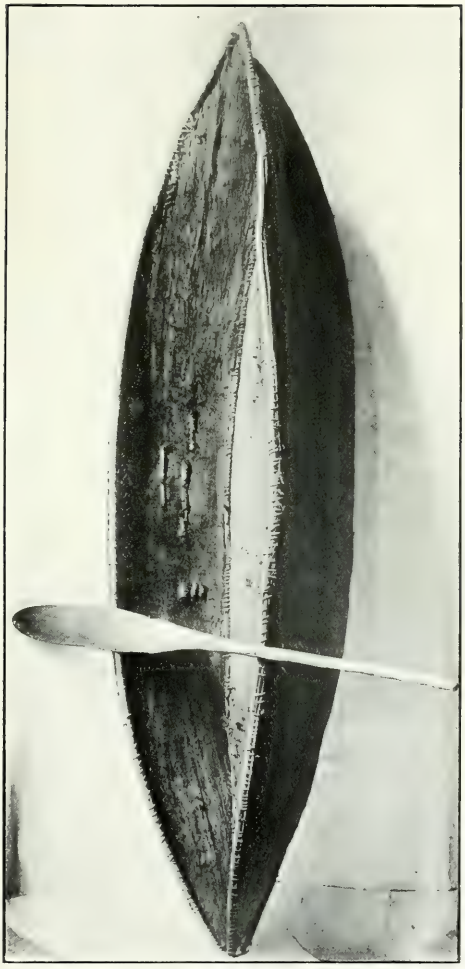
gunwale. In the very largest we find a transitional form between the whole-sheet and the sewn-bark canoe. The sewn-bark canoe (Pl. XIX.) was in use, concurrently with the whole-sheet form, from just north of Brisbane, northwards as far as Rockingham Bay; it is also found on both sides of the Gulf, but not at the southern end, and on the north coast as far as Port Essington. Many different types are found, in some of which two, in others three, seven, or many pieces are stated to be used. Spencer and Gillen describe the Anula boat as follows: It is seventeen feet long with a beam of four feet; the bark is gum-tree, seven strips being used in all—two for each side of the bow and stern, and three for the body of the boat. One of these forms the whole of one side, save for a short distance at each end; the others form the opposite side; there is no keel. The gunwale is strengthened by a mangrove pole, and the canoe is prevented from collapsing inwards by cross-pieces and ribs; ties of bark rope hold them together. It is, of course, necessary to caulk the seams of such canoes, and Spencer and Gillen give grass filling as the Anula method; elsewhere the boats seem to be caulked with wax or gum.

The single-sheet canoes were propelled by poling, by the hands, by short scoops of bark, or by regular paddles; the latter method was in use for sewn-bark canoes. In New South Wales there was always a fire in the canoe when they went fishing, at which the fish were broiled and eaten half warmed. When a woman paddled to the fishing-ground, she placed her

child on her shoulders, so that it could cling on by her hair; she then dropped on her knees in the middle of the canoe and squatted on her heels, jamming her knees against the side. The position can hardly have been comfortable, even without the fire to roast the small of her back, which is recorded to have left conspicuous scars in many cases.

The third Australian type is the dug-out; this is found in the north of Queensland (Pl. XIV.) and at Port Essington with an outrigger, which has certainly been introduced from New Guinea. In the extreme north, near Cape York, they use the double outrigger. At Port Essington, and in various parts of New South Wales and South Queensland, a simple dug-out was also used, probably small, concurrently with other forms. It is rather doubtful whether the Port Essington form is purely Malay, or whether the Malay form now in use superseded an older native form. In the eastern area the foreign origin is improbable; north of Sydney these dug-outs are said to have been no more than four feet long, just large enough for one person. It is difficult to see how they came to be introduced, or what advantage they have over the bark canoe.

The outrigged canoe was much more imposing; at Cape York they have a length of fifty feet sometimes, and are navigated with sails as well as paddles; the single outrigger canoe is sometimes over twenty feet long. The sails are in the bows, and though they make a good deal of leeway under ordinary circumstances, when they are running free they attain the respectable speed of seven or eight knots. The



Canoe, Port Denison

paddles are diamond- or bat-shaped, according to the locality. Although they are very long, these canoes are extremely narrow, and their capacity was not much greater than that of the bark canoe, though they are, of course, much safer. The largest crew recorded of any outrigged canoe is fifteen men.

It seems pretty clear that the outrigged canoe is not Australian in origin, and equally clear that the bark canoe is so. But whether the sewn-bark canoe may not have been due to the drifting ashore of some Melanesian canoe is another question. There are several well-authenticated instances of New Caledonian canoes coming ashore on the coast of Queensland, and it is just here that the sewn-bark type is found. Probably the matter will never be settled.

CHAPTER VI

FOOD

Fishing, hooks, nets, weirs, etc.; cooking. Fowling, snaring, netting, etc.; cooking. Tracking. Hunting, spearing kangaroos, cooking, opossums; tree-climbing. Crocodile noosing. Food tabus. Division of game. Cannibalism, food, ceremonial, magical. Moths, grubs as food. Honey. Fermented liquors. Water-finding. Cultivation of plants. Nardoo, zamia nuts, yams, etc. Pituri.

In few parts of Australia can the native count on anything like regular supplies of food. He is dependent on the course of the seasons for his seeds and fruits; the time of year also affects the supply of fish in many parts; and in Central Australia, perhaps owing to the barrenness of the land, much time is given up, if our accounts are accurate, to magical ceremonies, whose object is to promote the increase of game and plant life, so difficult does the native find it to obtain sustenance.

Broadly speaking, the Australian has four kinds of nourishment, fish, flesh, grubs and insects, and vegetable; but the supply of these varies very largely in different parts of the country. Near Lake Alexandrina, for example, five hundred or six hundred people would gather and stay for months together; during the *bunya-bunya* season, once in three years

tribes would come from a great distance in South Queensland to enjoy the fruit. In New South Wales, a kind of a moth, *Agrotis*, formed the staple food of the natives for weeks in one part of the mountains. But it was rare that there was a certain supply of this sort; as a rule, the native does not know until he catches it what his dinner will consist of.

There are many different methods of procuring the fish, nearly all of which are practised in North Queensland and included by Dr. Roth in his admirable study of the search for food in that area. He mentions fourteen distinct methods, many of which are again subdivided. One of the simplest, requiring no appliances, is that employed on parts of the Georgina River, where a sort of catfish abounds; the blacks walk the stream and transfix the fish with their feet. Another procedure is to make the water muddy by trampling with the feet and then to hit the fish or spear them when they come to the surface. More important is the method of poisoning; Dr. Roth enumerates more than twenty vegetable substances used in this way, and these by no means exhaust the list of plants so used in Australia, for it does not include *Duboisia* species, one kind of which gives the well-known pituri and is also used in Central Australia to poison the water-holes for emu.

More complicated are the methods collectively termed 'bobbing.' Eels are caught by transfixing big round worms with finely split lawyer cane, and putting a dozen or so of this bait down at the end of a short stick. As soon as the fisherman feels a

bite, he jerks the stick over his shoulder and the eel lies on the bank. Sometimes the bait is not impaled, but simply tied head and tail; but the most remarkable method, used with small fish fry, entails the use of spider's web; on the lower Tully River is a very large spider, which the natives kill, preserving the abdomen; they then wind off the web upon the end of a stick and dip the free end into the glutinous silk bag of the dead spider and bob it on the surface of the water; the fry bite very readily and get their jaws stuck together, with the result that they are hauled out at a great pace by children as well as grown persons.

Big fish, such as the dugong and turtle, are captured with the aid of the remora or sucker fish; it is often found fixed on the bottom of a canoe and then kept in water for a few days. Going out to sea, the native ties a string to its tail, and as soon as he has got as close as may be to a dugong, over goes the remora; it probably fixes itself on the game, but its only use is to serve as a guide; the fish is not drawn in with the aid of the remora, which only tells the native when he can with advantage make use of his harpoon. The harpoon is used not only for dugong and turtle, but also for the larger kinds of fish: it is essentially a spear with a detachable head, fixed to the shaft so that the two cannot be entirely separated, by a line of some sort; the shaft is often itself secured by a line, so that the fisherman can haul in his own booty without the need of going after his harpoon. At the mouth of the Tully River shark are harpooned by

moonlight; the harpooner can see by the ripple on the water where the fish is; his line, thirty fathoms long, is carefully coiled in a dilly bag hung round his neck, a few coils only being held free in his hand, and as soon as he has struck his fish he bends forward to allow the line to uncoil.

Fishgigs are often used for striking fish in the water; sometimes the black will strike at random in a deep hole, and after floods a row of men will wade and capture eels by the same haphazard method. In the case of big fish they will dive and spear them from the side or from underneath; this they do in some parts with the aid of a fire, getting the fish between them and the light. Spearing by torchlight was also common in Victoria; at night three bark canoes would go upstream, in the stem of each several torches of manna-tree wood; a native stood or sat with his back to the light and struck at the fish as he passed them. Another method was to lie across the canoe with the face in the water.

Fish hooks of various kinds are in use, from the primitive vine tendril to the European article in our own day. Besides these, eagle-hawk talons, shells ground down, tortoise-shell similarly prepared, composite hooks with emu, kangaroo, or catfish barbs, simple bone hooks and hooks of two pieces of wood joined by a lump of resin, are in use. The bait in the north is a shrimp or crab, which is never transfixed but invariably chewed before use; on the Murray, according to Angas, small boys were killed and their fat employed as bait. In New South Wales fishing

with hook and line was the especial province of the women, and in the section on canoes will be found a description of how a fond mother took her offspring with her to the fishing-ground. In the canoe was a fire on a mud or seaweed hearth; the fish was half warmed on this and then eaten.

A favourite method in some parts is to put down hollow logs of eucalyptus; these are left for some hours and then taken up again. More common is the use of baskets and cages; on the Tully small fry go up the river in flood-time in a column a foot broad and a foot deep; when a woman sees a convenient spot she bends over, holds the mouth of her dilly bag to meet the advancing shoal, and very quickly has it full; the catch is then tied up in wild ginger leaves for baking. More elaborate is the capture of eels with the eel-basket, a long, narrow cage like a rather magnified umbrella cover; they are laid lengthways in a shallow part of a creek, and the fishermen beat downstream.

To enumerate all the different kinds of nets and methods of using them would require a chapter to itself. On the Diamantina nets twenty to twenty-two feet long are worked by two men; they are wider in the middle than at the ends, and have light poles nine feet long at each end. Twenty or thirty nets are worked together, and the men swim out, holding the poles with one hand and one foot; they slowly approach the bank in crescent formation, driving the fish before them. Twenty minutes or so is required for a single haul, and they rest after three or four; except

for this interval and a rest of three hours in the heat of the day, they work without intermission.

In South Australia the nets were furnished with a bag containing smaller meshes at one end, into which the smaller fish were driven as the net was hauled in. They apparently wait on the shore until they see the fish before they unfold the net; then they take it into the water, those on shore keeping them informed of the position of the fish; as soon as they are enclosed in it, the net is drawn ashore, the central part being kept open by straight sticks of Mallee tied across it. In the Boulia district the method is the reverse of that followed on the Diamantina, which is not far to the east. Two men start into the water at a time, the net between them; they are followed by other pairs who overlap the preceding couple, and a closed space is thus gradually formed, into which the beaters drive the fish; the nets are about six feet long. Folding frame nets are in use in Queensland; instead of being raised out of the water when a fish is caught, the two halves are shut on one another like a purse; to do this the fisherman may grope the shallow channels, the net at his side or in front; or it may be fixed in a narrow channel with a watcher on the bank, or a snag close to it, ready to jump in when he sees a fish. Another method, somewhat like the preceding one, is to use two nets, one in each hand; the fishermen take the water in a semicircle, and others, sometimes without nets, will act as beaters. As a rule, the Australian net has neither floats nor sinkers, but Sturt records the use of both on the Darling River.

Over the greater part of Australia stone dams and weirs are in use for catching fish. They have breaks in them, in which are sometimes fixed nets, or the platforms may be covered with boughs and a top layer of grass, in which the fish are entangled ; in the Gulf stone dams are erected in the shape of a semi-circle, the extremity of which may reach as much as three hundred yards from the shore. But the most famous weir is in the Brewarina. G. S. Lang says of it : This weir is about sixty-five miles above the township of Bourke ; it is built at a rocky part of the river, from eighty to one hundred yards in width, and extends about one hundred yards of the river's course. It forms an immense labyrinth of stone walls about three or four feet high, forming circles from two to four feet in diameter, some opening into one another, forming very crooked but continuous passages, others having only one opening. In floods as much as twenty feet of water sweeps over them and carries away the tops of the walls ; but the lower parts are so solidly and skilfully built with large, heavy stones, which must have been brought a considerable distance and with great combined labour, that they have stood every flood from time immemorial. Every summer this labyrinth is repaired, and the fish in going up and down the river get confused in its mazes, and are caught by the blacks by hand in immense quantities.

Other enclosures were made, especially at flood-time, with stakes or bush fences. Dr. Roth describes one which he saw at the head of Birthday Creek ; it was one hundred feet long, composed of six or eight long

logs supported on forked timbers at the height of the water surface; to the timbers were fastened dozens of thin switches, the ends of which were firmly stuck in the mud; they were eight or ten feet high, and near the sides were left two openings in which nets were set; the fish were taken in these, as long as the floods lasted; then they were speared along the base of the switches which formed the central portion. In a tidal creek near Mapoon, the site of the Moravian mission, Dr. Roth saw a blind alley made of bushes; it was some three feet high, with a partition considerably below the level of the remainder.

On the Gwydir Mitchell found osier nettings of neat workmanship; the frame was as well squared as if a carpenter had made it; osier twigs were inserted at regular intervals so as to form an efficient snare; these were set up in a river and a small opening left in the centre, to which an ordinary net was applied.

Movable bush fences are also used; the women take up their positions across the whole breadth of a water-hole and push before them grass tussets and leafy boughs, by which the fish are pushed up to the bank.

Some kinds of shellfish, notably oysters, were not eaten in some parts; but mussels formed an important article of food on the Lower Murray. On Lake Alexandrina it was eaten with a kind of bulrush root; the women used to dive for the mussels with a net round their necks; they remained three or four minutes under water, and often brought up a net full; they dived from a raft and cooked the mussels on a hearth of wet seaweed and sand. For eight months in the

year they gathered crayfish; these they caught with their toes, groping for them in the water; when they had caught them they immediately crushed the claws to prevent the fish from nipping them. The crayfish were roasted in the embers of their charcoal fires.

A common way of killing fish was for the fisherman to bite them just behind the head. The preparations for cooking differed according to the tribe; sometimes they were simply thrown on the fire and broiled—on the Macleay River they were carefully gutted and roasted on hot embers; but the West Australian method was more elaborate and produced results not unworthy of more famous chefs; the method is called *yadarn dookoon*, or tying-up cooking. A piece of thick and soft paper bark is selected and torn into an oblong shape; the fish is laid in this and wrapped up, strings of bark are wound tightly round the bark and the fish, which is then slowly baked in heated sand covered with hot ashes; when the fish is done, the bark is opened and forms a dish full of juice or gravy.

Birds form an important article of food in all parts of Australia, the most important being the emu, turkey, duck, pigeon, and various kinds of cockatoo. Some of the methods of capturing these and other birds are sublimely simple; in New South Wales, Angas tells us, a native would stretch himself on a rock in the sun, a piece of fish in his hand; this would attract the attention of a bird of prey, which the black would promptly seize by the leg as soon as it tried to carry off the fish. In the same way water-fowl were taken by swimming out under water and pulling them

beneath the surface, or, with a little more circumstance, by noosing them with a slender rod, the head of the fowler being covered with weeds as he swam out to his prey, which he dragged beneath the water; as soon as he had the bird in his hand he broke its neck, thrust it into his girdle, and was ready for another victim. Shags and cormorants more often rest on stakes than on the surface of the water; accordingly, on the Lower Murray, stakes were set up for them; the native swam out with his noose and snared them as before. During dark nights they drove shags from their resting-places, catching them as they tried to settle, and receiving in the process severe bites from the terrified birds. Almost equally simple was the method of taking black swans in West Australia. At the moulting season young men lay in ambush on the banks till the birds had got too far away from deep water to be able to swim off; then they ran round them and cut off their retreat. The West Australians would also kill a bird as it flew from its nest; one man creeping up threw his spear so as to wound it slightly as it sat, and the other brought it down with his missile club as it flew off. Boldest of all, perhaps, is the method of taking turkey bustards in Queensland; the fowler hangs a moth or a grasshopper, sometimes even a small bird, to the end of a rod, on which is also a noose. With a bush in front of him he creeps up to his prey, which is fascinated by the movements of the animal on the rod; as soon as the black is near enough he slips the noose over its head and secures it.

In the Boulia district pelicans are taken from

ambushes; the fowler throws shells some distance into the water, attracting the bird, which thinks the splashes are made by fish rising; then the black pats the water with his fingers, to mimic the splashing of fish on the surface, the pelican swims round and presently falls a victim to the boomerang, or is captured by hand. The Torres Straits pigeon is taken by simply throwing any ordinary stick into the flock, as it passes down to the foreshore at no great distance from the ground; or it may be knocked down in a more elaborate way. The flocks take the same path every night, and a high bushy tree is selected which lies in their path; the black holds in his hands a thin switch, some fifteen feet long, which is tied to his wrist to prevent it from being accidentally dropped; he himself is lashed to the tree to prevent accidents; and when the pigeons come past he sweeps at them, generally bagging a fair number. On Hinchinbrook Island, the roosting-trees were known to the natives. They prepared fires beneath in the daytime; when the pigeons had retired to rest, the fires were lighted and down came the birds.

On the Tully the black observes on what trees the cockatoos roost. Then he makes fast to a suitable branch a long lawyer cane, which reaches to the ground; at night he mounts this, holding on by his first and second toes when he moves his hands; slung round his neck he carries a long thin stick; and with this he knocks the birds down as soon as he is within reach of them. Small cockatoos and other birds are also captured with bird-lime, which is spread not only on the branches on which they roost, but also on the

young blossoms. The swamp pheasant is taken on its nest by means of a net; in Gippsland they are taken on the nest by hand.

The boomerang is a very effective weapon in a large flock of birds. Grey describes how they are knocked down with the kyli at night; wounded birds are used as decoys; for these birds seem to be much attached to each other. One is fastened to a tree, and its cries bring some of its companions to its aid.

In Victoria and South Australia wickerwork erections were made for the birds to settle on; near them the black lay in ambush, his noose ready, and attracted his prey by imitating their calls.

Emus are powerful birds, weighing perhaps 130 lbs., and they are not so easily captured. Strong nets, sometimes fifty yards in length, are often employed to take them. The hunter notes the track by which the bird visits a water-hole, and sets up his net some thirty or forty yards behind it, the operation taking no more than five minutes; when it returns, its flight is prevented by stationing men at possible avenues of escape, the hunters rush out and the bird is entangled in the net or knocked over with boomerangs or *nulla-nullas*. Sometimes an alley was built, broad at the entrance and narrowing continually, till it ended in a net; near the opening, midway between the ends, the hunter concealed himself and imitated the call of the bird; this he does by means of a hollow log, some two or three feet long, from which the inside core has been burnt. Holding this close to the ground over a small excavation, he makes a sort of drumming sound; the

emu struts past the men in ambush, and is easily driven into the net.

Emu pits are dug, either singly or in combination; near the feeding-grounds sometimes they are combined with a fence, opposite the openings of which they are placed, with a large central pit, in which are ambushed three or four blacks to call the birds. The emu is hunted with dogs or surrounded by the whole of a black camp; it may also be speared by stalking it. The hunter rubs himself with earth to get rid of any smell from the body; then with bushes in front of him and a collar-like head-dress in some parts, he makes for the bird. Young cassowaries are often run down.

Ducks are often taken by stretching a long net across a river or lagoon; the ends are fixed in the trees or on posts; and one or more men go up-stream at a distance from the river, and then drive the birds down. At a suitable distance from the net they are frightened and caused to rise; then a native whistles like the duck-hawk, and a piece of bark is thrown into the air to imitate the flight of the hawk; at this the flock dips and many are caught in the net. For this mode of capture four men are required. Ducks are also stalked and speared, or snared by fixed nooses set in the swamps, according to a statement of Morrell's, which, however, he leaves us to infer the kind of bird caught in this way.

Flock pigeons are taken by a method unlike any described. Their habits are noted, and a small artificial water-hole made in the neighbourhood of their usual drinking-place; near this the fowler conceals himself, with a net ten or twelve feet in length laid

flat on the ground close to the water; the lower edge is fixed to the ground by means of twigs, and along the whole length of the upper edge runs a thin curved stick, the end of which the black holds in his hand; the pigeons sit on the water like ducks; and as soon as a favourable opportunity presents itself, the fowler, with one movement of the arm, turns the net over and bags the unsuspecting birds. For scrub turkeys a series of lawyer cane hoops are set up with connecting strips; this is baited in the morning with nuts, fruit, etc., and about sundown he takes up his position in his ambush some twelve feet away right in front of the opening; as soon as the turkey walks in, the black rushes out and secures it.

In West Australia birds were generally cooked by plucking them and throwing them on the fire; but when they wished to dress a bird nicely they drew it and cooked the entrails separately, parts of them being considered great delicacies. A triangle was then formed round the bird by three red-hot pieces of stick against which ashes were placed; hot coals were stuffed inside it, and it was served full of gravy on a dish of bark.

In Victoria a sort of oven was made of heated stones on which wet grass was strewn; the birds were placed on the grass and covered with it; more hot stones were piled on and the whole covered with earth. In this way they were half stewed. An ingenious method of cooking large birds was to cover them with a coating of mud and put them on the fire; the mud-pie was covered with ashes and a big fire kept up till the dish was ready; then the mud crust was taken off, the

feathers coming with it, and a juicy feast was before the hungry black. The Australian is by no means uncivilised; he appreciates high game as much as any gourmet amongst us, but he enjoys it in a somewhat different way. The Cooper's Creek aborigines collect in a bladder the fat of an exceedingly high, not to say putrid pelican, and bake it in the ashes; then each black has a suck at the bag, the contents of which are distinctly stronger than train-oil, and what runs out of the mouth is rubbed on the face; thus nothing is wasted.

In the hunting of animals the native can also call to his aid his skill in tracking.

Like most savages, the Australian black is keen-sighted, and he makes use of his eyes when an enemy has to be followed or an animal hunted down. Many stories are told of the extraordinary powers of the trackers. Cunningham, an early writer, says that they will say correctly how long a time has passed since the track was made; in the case of people known to them they will even recognise the footprint as we know a person's handwriting. A tracker has been known to say that the man, unknown to him, on whose track he was, was knock-kneed, and this turned out to be correct. On one occasion a white man had been murdered, and it was suspected that he had been thrown into a certain water-hole; before it was dragged a native, who could have had no knowledge of the affair, was called in to pronounce on the signs; decomposition of the body had already set in, it appears, and there were slight traces of this on the surface of the pool; the native

gave a sniff and pronounced that it was 'white man's fat,' and so it turned out to be.

Grey tells a story of how he was galloping through the bush and lost his watch; the scrub was thick and consequently the ground was unfavourable, but the watch was recovered in half an hour.

But his powers of tracking are more important to him in the search for food.

With the exception of the kangaroo and the opossum there are no quadrupeds which the Australian native employs largely in his cuisine. The kangaroo may be taken in wet weather with dogs; but it is more often netted in the same way that emus are taken; sometimes three nets form three sides of a square, and beaters drive the animal in. Somewhat similar is the method of firing the bush, which is also used for other animals; in this case the flames take the place of the net, and in their advance drive the kangaroo towards the hunters. They may also be driven, men taking the place of the fire; or, finally, the most sporting method, they may be stalked single-handed or even walked to a standstill; but for the latter feat extraordinary physical powers are needed. For single-handed stalking great patience is needed; sometimes the *lubra* (wife) helps by giving signals by whistling; at others the hunter will throw a spear right over the kangaroo, which believes that danger threatens it from the side on which his enemy is not; then the hunter creeps up and spears it. Grey describes how the West Australian runs down a kangaroo; starting on its recent tracks, he follows them till he comes in sight of it; using no con-

concealment, he boldly heads for it and it scours away, followed by the hunter. This is repeated again and again till nightfall, when the black lights a fire and sleeps on the track; next day the chase recommences, till human pertinacity has overcome the endurance of the quadruped and it falls a victim to its pursuer.

Before they prepare the kangaroo for cooking, the tail sinews are carefully drawn out and wrapped round the club for use in sewing cloaks, or as lashing for spears. Two methods of cooking the kangaroo were known in West Australia; an oven might be made in the sand, and when it was well heated, the kangaroo placed in it, skin and all, and covered with ashes; a slow fire was kept up, and when the baking was over, the kangaroo was laid on its back; the abdomen was cut open as a preliminary and the intestines removed, leaving the gravy in the body, which was then cut up and eaten. The second method was to cut up the carcase and roast it, portion by portion. The blood was made into a sausage and eaten by the most important man present.

In Queensland the preparations are more elaborate. After the removal of the tail sinews, the limbs are dislocated to allow of their being folded over; then the tongue is drawn out, skewered over the incisors, which are used for spokeshaves, and would be damaged if exposed to direct heat; the intestines are removed and replaced by heated stones, the limbs drawn to the side of the body and the whole tied up in bark; then the bundle is put in the ashes and well covered over.

In the Paroo district the kangaroo is steamed; the

TREE-CLIMBING, N. CLARENCE RIVER (p. 105)

oven is made of stones and wet grass, and the whole covered over with earth; if the steam is not sufficient, holes are made and water is poured in.

The wallaby is taken with nets or in cages placed along its path. When this little kangaroo makes for shelter, it runs with its head down and consequently does not see the trap. In some districts they are trapped in pits, primarily intended to break their legs. The most ingenious method was in use in South Australia: at the end of an instrument made of long, smooth pieces of wood was fixed a hawk skin, so arranged as to simulate the living bird. Armed with this the hunter set out, and when he saw a wallaby he shook the rod and uttered the cry of a hawk; the wallaby took refuge in the nearest bush, and the hunter stealing up, secured it with his spear.

The opossom may be hunted on moonlight nights or at any time with dogs, but the commonest method is to examine the tree trunks for recent claw marks. When these are found the native ascends the tree, cuts a hole at the spot where he believes the opossum to be, and drags the animal out. Another method is to smoke it out.

Various ways of climbing trees are known, the most ordinary being perhaps that of cutting notches for the feet; then the native ascends, usually with the ball of the big toe of each foot nearest the tree; but in South Australia he walked up sideways, putting the little toe of his left foot in the notch and raising himself by means of the pointed end of his stick stuck into the bark. In Queensland and New South Wales the rope

sling is also found; in some cases it fits round the man's waist and he uses his axe (Pl. XX.); in other cases one end of the vine or bark rope is twisted round his right arm, then he tries to throw the other end round the trunk of the tree; on the end is a knot, to prevent it from slipping from his hand; and when he has caught it, he puts his right foot against the tree, leans back and begins to walk up, throwing the *kamin* a little higher at each step. If the tree is very large, he carries his axe in his mouth and cuts notches for his big toe; the *kamin* is taken off his right arm and wound round his right thigh when the hand is wanted for cutting notches. When not in use the *kamin* is not rolled up, as might be imagined; it is simply dragged through the bush by its knotted end; it is hard and smooth. This is really the most practical method. As a rule, men only ascend trees, but in some cases women and even women carrying children have been seen by explorers to do so.

Other animals are of less importance. In the north of Australia the crocodile is taken with a noose, which a native will slip over his head, or by putting up screens in connection with a fence across a stream, in which an opening is left. The screen is made of split cane placed horizontally and all woven together with a very close mesh; it can be rolled up like a blind.

Rats are taken in traps or knocked over with sticks; iguanas are speared in the open or dug from their burrows; frogs are taken in the water in flood-time or dug out; and snakes are often found in iguana burrows. The wombat and bandicoot are dug out.

It might be thought that the natural difficulties of securing a good meal were sufficient without any addition of artificial ones; but this is not the view of the Australian native. Complicated rules, which varied with the tribe, limited the species and parts of the individual animals which were lawful food for boys, young men, girls, married women, and so on. In the Wotjoballuk tribe boys might not eat of the kangaroo, padimelon, or young native companion; until he reaches the age of forty a man may not partake of the tail part of the emu or bustard. In the Bigambul tribe young men might not eat of the female opossum, carpet snake, wild turkey, and so on. Honey from certain trees is also a forbidden sweet. Sometimes the penalty believed to follow the breaking of these rules was nothing more serious than grey hairs; more often illness, skin diseases, and death were prophesied as the judgment that would overtake the offenders. In the Wakelbura tribe it was believed that the young man or young woman who ate emu, black-headed snake, or porcupine would pine away and die, uttering the cry of the creature which they had eaten, for the spirit of the creature would enter them.

The origin of these food tabus is very difficult to get at; but in some cases there can be little doubt that the old men were simply playing for their own hand in imposing them.

This was not all, for there were superadded complicated rules as to the distribution of the game which a man might kill and enjoy personally. Among the Kurnai a catch of eels might be divided as follows:

The fisherman and his wife would take a large eel, his mother's brother a large eel, the children of his mother's brother a small eel, and his married daughter a small eel. If a Ngarego man killed a native bear it would be divided as follows: he himself would take the left ribs, his father the right hind leg, his mother the left hind leg, his elder brother the right and his younger the left foreleg, his elder sister would receive the backbone, the younger the liver, his father's brother the right ribs, his mother's brother a piece of the flank, while the head was sent to the bachelors' camp. In the case of a kangaroo both the father and mother of the hunter would get a large portion, but they would have to share it with their own parents.

It will be noticed that there is no provision for the children of the man's own family; this is due to the fact that they are often provided for by their grandparents. The supply of vegetable food obtained by a Kurnai woman belonged to her and her children.

Among the Yerkla Mining there was a still more communistic arrangement, for the food was shared equally between the whole camp. There were also rules in many tribes as to property in game; if a hunter wounded an animal it was his property, if it was finally taken, whether he gave it the *coup de grâce* or not.

Before leaving the subject of animal food we must say a word or two on cannibalism. Human flesh is nowhere a regular article of food; some blacks undoubtedly kill to eat, others only eat those who are

killed in battle, or have died of disease. Sometimes there is a magical idea attaching to the use of human flesh or fat, especially kidney fat, which is cut out before death has taken place: it is held to convey to the eater the courage of the victim. Sometimes it is the bodies of enemies which are disposed of in this way; in South Queensland it was the recognised method of giving honourable burial to your friends. In many parts both sexes and all classes eat human flesh; elsewhere it is only the men who will do so. There are no special ceremonies connected with cooking or eating in most districts, and most parts of the body are eaten, the thighs being the *bonne bouche*. In West Australia, on the Gascoyne River, some ritual is found in connection with eating human flesh. A girl was killed, when she was bathing with several others, by a native, who decoyed her away. She was very plump; the object of killing her was to acquire this desirable quality. A big fire was made, and after removing her intestines, two natives carried her round the fire a few times in an upright position, the others meanwhile singing in a low voice. Then the body was put in the heart of the fire, where a space had been cleared, covered with ashes and cooked like a kangaroo. One of the participants in the feast was a companion who had been bathing with her.

In the Turribul tribes ceremonial combats follow the initiation ceremonies. If a man is killed in one of these his body is eaten. Each tribal group sits by its own fire, and a great medicine man singes the body all over till it turns copper coloured. Then the body is

opened, the entrails and heart are buried, and pieces of the flesh cut off and thrown to the different parties; the fat was rubbed on the faces of the principal medicine men, and the skin and bones were carried by the mother for months. The grave in which were the heart and other parts was so sacred that none save a few old medicine men would approach it; it was marked with blackened sticks tied with grass.

Near Maryborough the skin was taken off, and the body distributed to the men and old women, the father or father's brother officiating as carver. The kidney fat was rubbed on the spears, and the kidneys themselves stuck on the points; this was to make the weapons deadly. The meat is stated to look like horseflesh and smell like beef when it is being cooked.

Statements have been made that a girl was sacrificed in South Queensland to some evil spirit; there is no evidence to show that this was the case, and it may be dismissed as an invention.

Insects and grubs are highly important articles of food in many parts.

Mention has already been made of the *Agrotis spina* moth as an important item in the food of some of the natives of New South Wales. To procure them they lighted fires under the rocks on which they collect, and when the moths fell down they were collected in bushels; a fire was lighted and kept burning till the ground was considered hot enough; then the ashes were cleared away, the moths placed on the heated ground, and stirred about till the down and wings

came off. After winnowing, they were eaten, or placed in a wooden vessel and pounded. Sometimes they were smoked; otherwise they would not keep longer than a week. In taste they resemble a sweet nut, but the effects for the first few days are unpleasant. The natives, however, got fat on them, and so did their dogs.

Many kinds of grubs are eaten. They had a special instrument for drawing them out of the trees. Ants' pupæ or eggs are also a favourite food. Sometimes the pupæ were winnowed clear of ants, but in Queensland the two are eaten together, mixed with salt water. In some parts the ants are allowed by a hungry aboriginal to run up his legs: he then sweeps them off and puts them into his mouth as fast as his hands can serve him.

Honey is naturally in great demand. Sometimes the nest is found by seeing bees round the entrance; more often a bee is caught and a piece of down stuck on its body with gum; then the native sets himself to track the bee, which may rise high in the air. When he comes to the tree he cuts out the nest, for the native bee is stingless; sometimes, to save trouble, the honey is fished out with bark mops. When obtained it is usually mixed with water and grass swabs dipped into it; it may also be allowed to ferment. In some parts honey is said to be obtained direct from the flowers, either by soaking them in water, or by sucking them directly.

Beetles, wasp grubs, March flies, caterpillars, all are on occasions to be found in the larder of the black;

but they do not stay there long, for he is not given to foresight.

Among articles of diet may also be mentioned clay, which is eaten without preparation, both in times of scarcity and as dessert after an ordinary meal.

Honey was not the only sweet substance known to the Australians. In various parts a sweet secretion, probably of a species of Psylla, was collected from the trees, and sometimes eaten, sometimes infused in water and fermented. It was gathered in the summer and eaten with various kinds of animal food. A fermented drink was also prepared from the fruit of the pandanus.

In a dry and thirsty land like Australia the European is naturally at a loss for water; but the native has many ingenious methods of obtaining it, and can live comfortably where a white man would perish miserably. In many places are found what are called native wells—narrow deep holes, the position of which is known to the natives, for otherwise they would hardly be able to find them. But when these holes and ordinary water-holes fail them, they are far from being at the end of their resources. In the mallee scrub they dig down and get pieces of root some eighteen inches long; there is plenty of water in this, which, when the root is turned on its end, drains out into a vessel placed beneath. Where the pandanus-tree grows the moisture below the surface is tested by pushing a spear three or four feet into the ground; if the point is moist, a bunch of dry grass is rammed down; this acts as a strainer, and the water is sucked

up with a reed. Sometimes the base of the Melaleuca-tree bulges out; when this is cut open it is found to contain a pint or two of water. Where real water is not obtainable the native refreshes himself with a sweet substance from a Sterculia. They also cut holes in the trunk; the water lodges in these holes and rots the inside of the tree. When water is wanted they cut a foot or two below the original incision and obtain an abundant supply from their reservoir.

This brings us to the subject of plant-food. Grey says that a species of flag was cultivated in West Australia, at any rate to the extent of burning it, in order to improve the next crop. He describes extensive yam grounds on the Hutt River, but it does not follow that these were artificial. The evidence of Gregory, however, leaves no doubt that there was actual cultivation on the west coast. He says that the natives, when they dug up yams, replaced the heads (*Journ. Anth. Inst.*, xvi. 131), and this can only be described as cultivation. The cultivation of purslane (*Portulaca*) seems to be a well-established fact. It is grown like melons on slightly raised mounds; before the seed vessels are ripe, the plant is cut, turned upside down and dried in the sun; then the seed vessels are plucked and rubbed down and the seed collected. Many pounds' weight can be collected in a day, even where there is no cultivation, and the cakes from it are far more nutritious than the well-known nardoo cakes, on which Burke and Wills tried to subsist.

To describe in detail the vegetable food of the

Australian aborigines would demand far more space than can be here allotted to the subject. Probably they employ as food at least three hundred species of vegetables, using the roots or tubers, the pith, the leaves, the fruits, kernels or husks, the seeds, and the gum, according to the species. Often more than one product is in use from a single species.

When other food is scarce *nardoo* is the stand-by of the natives in the centre of Australia, but its nutritive properties are small. Of all the fruits eaten by the natives the most remarkable is perhaps the *bunya-bunya* nut. It is found in a limited area behind Brisbane, and bears fruit in abundance only once in three years. It is ripe in January, and tribes come from a distance for the feast; each has its own trees; in fact, each family owns one or more. The nut is roasted in the fire; it is also placed in a water-hole and eaten after germination. *Zamia* nuts (*Cycas media*) form an important article of diet in many parts; in its raw state it is poisonous. The shell is taken off the nuts, which are broken, pounded, and left in a dilly bag for four or five days in running water; when they are soft enough they are pounded and baked under the ashes. Grey gives a somewhat different account. He says they are soaked, after being gathered in March, then they are placed in holes in the sand, where they remain till the pulp is quite dry. They are eaten raw or roasted, and in the latter state taste quite as nice as a chestnut. The yam (*dioscorea*) is also highly important; in some districts the holes from which the natives have dug them cover miles of

ground. It is generally considered the province of the women to dig roots, but in some parts the men do so too, in which case the produce is reserved for their use. To get a yam half an inch in circumference and a foot in length, a hole has to be dug about a foot square and two feet deep. To do this the women have only a pointed stick; this they drive firmly into the ground and shake it, so as to loosen the earth, which they scoop up and throw out with great rapidity with the fingers of the left hand. The roots are eaten raw or roasted; but in West Australia the natives always mix it with an earth before eating it, alleging that it otherwise is apt to cause dysentery. In Queensland it is washed, baked for four hours, and mashed up in a grass dilly bag; it is then strained through the dilly bag into a bark trough, in which the bag also remains until only fibre is left in it. Then the mash is washed, sometimes with seven or eight different waters. As soon as the washing is completed a hole is dug in some sandy place and lined with clean sand; into this the semi-liquid mass is poured, and when all the water has drained off, it looks much like tinned potato, according to Dr. Roth.

Morrell, the English sailor who was captive among the Queensland natives many years ago, gives an account of the way in which the fruit of *Avicennia officinalis* was prepared; a hole was dug and stones heated in the fire arranged on the bottom; on this was put the fruit and water sprinkled over it; then bark was put on the top and it was baked for two hours;

a second hole was dug, the fruit put in, water poured over it twice, and it was ready for eating.

The bean-tree, or Moreton Bay chestnut, is prepared by being steeped eight or ten days; then it is dried in the sun, roasted on hot stones and pounded; mixed with water, it is made into thin cakes and baked.

Solanum hystrix, known as *walga* in South Australia, is prepared in a curious way; it is pounded and mixed with *congoo*, *i.e.* mallee root bark; then the shell and seeds are removed and a cake made. When the fruit was not obtainable, the blacks bled themselves and mixed blood and bark into cakes.

Mylitta australis, a kind of truffle, sometimes called native bread, was eaten in Victoria and possibly elsewhere. In West Australia the natives obtained from the acacias a kind of gum, called *kwonnat*, and on the grounds where this was obtainable assembled large crowds and held their annual markets.

A kind of bulrush was largely eaten in South Australia; it was prepared by being cooked between two stones; it was to them what bread is to the European. It was cooked on a heap of limestone with wood laid on the top; another layer of heated stones was placed on these and then wet grass to make steam; a mound of earth completed the oven. After chewing the bulrush root they spat out the fibrous part, which they converted into rope for fishing-lines, nets, etc. The mussel was usually eaten with the bulrush root.

This brief survey has not touched on a tithe of the important food-plants, but some idea will have been gained of the extent of the Australian garden and of

the complication of the cooking processes; indeed one may well wonder by what process they arrived at these ingenious processes, especially in the case of poisonous substances.

It is often asserted that the Australian does not store food; this is as untrue as that he does not cultivate his soil. Much of his food he must perforce eat quickly, or natural processes would make his labour in vain. But the *bunya-bunya* nut, grass and other seed cakes, and possibly other kinds of food, were certainly put aside for future use.

Before we leave the subject of vegetable products mention must be made of pituri, a remarkable plant, the botanical name of which is *Duboisia Hopwoodii*. It does not grow in all districts, and is the most important article of commerce. As soon as it is ready —it flowers in January—that is to say about March, messengers are sent, sometimes hundreds of miles, with spears, boomerangs, nets and other wares, to exchange for the pituri, which is in the form of half-green, half-yellow tea with plenty of chips in it. After roasting them on the ashes the chips become pliable and are wetted, teased up with the fingers, and the larger fragments removed. Some acacia leaves are then heated over the fire and then burnt; the ashes are mixed with pituri and the whole worked up into quids about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $\frac{5}{8}$ inch diameter. These are chewed, and when not in use are carried behind the ear.

Sometimes pituri is taken before fighting, but its use is common to all classes and both sexes; it seems to produce a voluptuous, dreamy sensation.

Tobacco is now in use among the blacks, of course of European importation, and they are said to smoke pituri when the supply runs short.

It is said that the native women use a species of *Goodenia* to make their children sleep when they are on a long journey.

CHAPTER VII

THE PLEASURES OF LIFE

Dances; Kuri dance, Molongo; religious dances; dramatic dances; mimetic dances. Musical instruments, corroboree music, songs and bards. Amusements, domestication of animals; games, cat's cradle, imitating footprints, bogy games, make-believe games, dolls, imitating elders. Athletic sports. Hand games. Toys, throwing sticks, ball, hide-and-seek, wit-wit.

EVERY one has heard of the Australian corroboree, as the dance is usually termed; but very few of those who have seen one have taken the trouble to give a detailed description of one. One of these few is Angas, who saw the scrub natives near the Murray perform the Kuri dance. He says that there was a great lack of order and system, the movements being changed at each performance. There were five distinct classes of performers; twenty-five young men and boys formed the main body; they were naked, save for gum leaves tied round the legs just above the knees, which, as they stamped about, made a loud, switching noise. In their hands they held a digging stick or a club and a few gum leaves; the former were held at arm's-length and struck alternately with the knees as they danced. They were painted from each shoulder down to the hips with five or six white stripes rising from the breast; on the faces were white perpendicular lines. Next came two

groups of women who kept time with bunches of leaves. Then two men wearing the *palyertatta*, an ornament made of two pieces of stick fastened cross-wise with feathers at the end; one had it fastened sideways on his head, and the other waved his to and fro in front of him. After them came a performer distinguished by a long spear, from the top of which hung a bunch of white feathers; the spear he held behind his back, but occasionally waved it over the dancers. Finally came two old men—the singers—who sang in monotone and beat time with digging sticks and clubs, from which they managed to produce two notes. While the dancers were dressing for the corroboree no one might approach them, but occasionally a burst of flame lighted up their movements. Then two men wrapped in opossum skins cleared a space for the singers. The spectators soon formed a body two or three rows deep, and the dancers then moved up towards them. The singers had already begun their tune, and the dancers—the band of young men—answered them with a singular deep shout. Then the man with the spear and feathers, *koonteroo*, stepped out, his body leaning forward, commenced a regular stamp; the two men with the *palyertattas* followed him and then the rest joined in; then for some time they stamped before the singers, and one after another sat down, the *palyertatta* and *koonteroo* men being the last to remain in. This was repeated four times. Then the *koonteroo* man, his head and body inclined to the left, stood on one foot and beat time with the other; then he did the same with the

ARUNTA PREPARED FOR CORROBOREE (p. 120)

other foot. Next, suddenly stopping, he planted his spear in the ground; at a time the two dancers then came up to the spear, the music going on all the time, till they formed a circular body, on each side of which the *palyertatta* men waved their instruments; finally one of them thrust in his arm and grasped the spear, all sinking at the same time on their knees; then the whole mass began to move away from the singers with a sort of grunting noise and dispersed at a distance of ten or twelve yards from them.

Songs and dances will travel extraordinary distances in Australia, the language of the song being often unintelligible to the performers. A good instance of how a corroboree passes from tribe to tribe is found in the case of the Molongo (Pl. XXII.). It has been described among the tribes south of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and has now reached the Dieri tribe near Lake Eyre, coming to them from the north-east. It may have been invented by the Worgaia; in the Gulf district it certainly did not originate.

Several performances of this dance were witnessed by Dr. Roth; and although all the performers were ignorant of the meaning of the words, he says that they had evidently been learned off by rote, as the correspondence between the syllables chanted at places a hundred miles apart was surprising, and this though the performance took five nights. The name Molongo is taken from the being, a sort of mischievous imp or devil, who figures as the chief personage on the last night; when he is out on his depredations, he prevents his tracks from becoming visible by tying the toes to

the knees, thus compelling himself to walk on his insteps; he is invisible except to the doctors. If the Molongo dance is not properly performed he takes vengeance both on men and women, although the latter are not permitted to approach the 'green-room,' in this case a dome-shaped bush-hut called *moyerjo*.

There are two leaders who have red bands over the head and forehead continued over each shoulder; in the armlet they wear a feather tuft. The red of the ornamentation is composed of down mixed with human blood. The head-piece, shown in Pl. XXII., is formed of grass tied round with hair twine. It is tipped with a kopi-covered portion, the basis of which is emu quills. They wear a belt of human hair from which hangs a bunch of eagle-hawk feathers and a pubic tassle or else a pearl shell in front. On the ankles are tied *coolibar* leaves which have been singed over the fire. The leader carries a forked stick tipped with white feathers.

The performers make their bow to the audience to the accompaniment of boomerang music; each stamps on the ground, half squats, vibrates thighs and knees in a curious way, quite indescribable to any one who has never seen it, and retires; then he advances again. The music is sung by the audience, and the performers go through various figures. Singing is often kept up, sometimes by relays all night long. On the succeeding evenings there are changes in the costumes and the words of the songs, but no new performer appears. On the fifth evening Molongo himself comes on the scene, with red ochre on his forehead and thighs, and feathers on his back. On this night special efforts

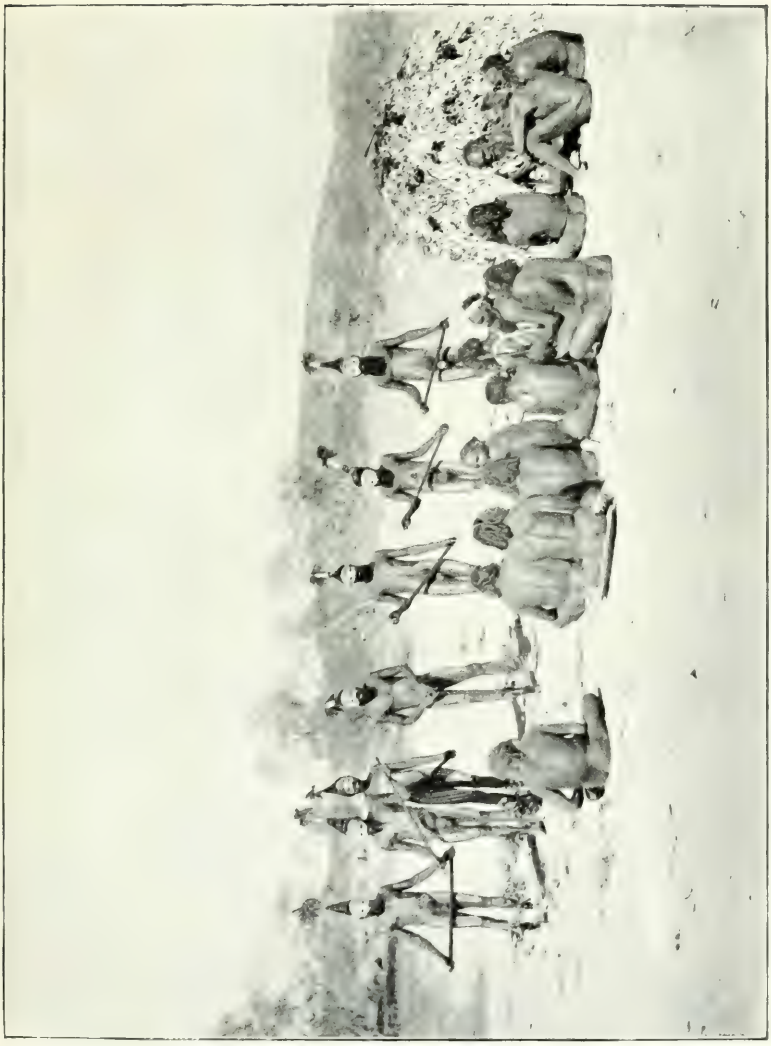
are made to keep the dance going without intermission until sunrise, and those who last out are rewarded with extra food. When the whole dance is at an end the head-dresses and other stage properties are destroyed.

This was not the only dance which bore a religious character. Parker says that he saw a performance intended to propitiate Mindi, a sort of evil spirit in the form of an immense snake, which can draw itself in and expand itself at will; it is, properly speaking, under the orders of the god, Punjil, who, according to some authors, sends Mindei or Mindi to punish the natives for their evil deeds. To propitiate him rude images of bark, one large and two small, were set up in a secluded spot. Both men and women in separate columns danced round it, approaching the spot with a sinuous course, touched the figure with a rod decorated with feathers. The same authority describes the Loddon dance known as *Yepene Amygdeet*, the dance of the separated spirits, which was introduced from the north-west. The natives held boughs in each hand, and waved them in unison over each shoulder alternately. After dancing for some time in lines and circles they gathered in one compact body; then slowly sinking to the ground, and burying their heads beneath the boughs, they represented, according to the old native, the approach of death. They maintained their motionless posture for some hours; this represented death itself. Then the leader of the ceremonies waved his bough over the prostrate mass of bodies, and suddenly springing to their feet, they joined him in his rejoicings.

In other cases the only object of the corroboree

seems to be to amuse the spectators and lookers-on. William Buckley, the wild white man, who lived for many years among the blacks of Victoria, describes one in which men and women, boys and girls, all engaged in dancing, which, if true, clearly demonstrates the secular character of the performance. The music was provided by women, who rolled their opossum skins tightly or stretched them between their knees. Some of these amusement dances consist of representations of scenes from real life. In the Maranoa district Mr. G. S. Lang saw a realistic representation of a cattle-raid by the blacks. In the first act the cattle, represented by blacks, were lying in the forest chewing the cud; then a party of blacks was seen creeping up to them. Two head were speared and the carcases cut up exactly as in real life; then was heard the sound of horsemen—these were the whites; again blacks figured as their representatives. A desperate fight ensued, and finally the victory fell to the blacks to the immense delight of the spectators.

In other cases the dramatic element is less prominent. Angas describes the canoe dance of the Rufus. Both men and women, painted with red and white ochre, join in the performance; they were ranged in a double row, each with a stick behind his arms; the legs are moved in time to the song. Suddenly they all removed the sticks from behind their arms, held them up in front, and began swaying their bodies alternately from side to side in the most graceful manner, imitating their movements when they paddle their bark canoes.



MOLONGO (CORROBOREE) (p. 124)

Other so-called dances, frequently performed in connection with initiation ceremonies, consist in the imitation of the movements of animals, sometimes with the addition of tails or other attire to increase the resemblance to the animal represented. The underlying idea is perhaps that the performers are in some way assimilated to the species whose life they mimic, exactly as the Central Australian believes himself to be able to control the totemic animal, whose flesh he partakes of as a magical rite. The magical meaning of the mimetic dance is better seen in some American and African customs, where the mimicry immediately precedes the hunt.

Collins has described to us portions of the initiation ceremonies at Port Jackson. In one scene the boys to be initiated were seated all together; the actors, twenty in number, paraded round them, running on their hands and knees in imitation of the dingo; the tail was a wooden sword stuck in the back of the girdle. As they passed the boys they threw up sand upon them; this was said to give them power over dogs and endow them with the good qualities of that animal. In the next scene the image of a kangaroo was brought on the shoulders of a man, who was followed by another with a load of brushwood—the haunts of the kangaroo. The grass kangaroo and the brushwood were laid at the feet of the boys. Then the actors collected a quantity of long grass and made a tail of it, which they fastened to the back of their girdles. Thus equipped they put themselves in motion like a herd of kangaroos, first jumping about with their

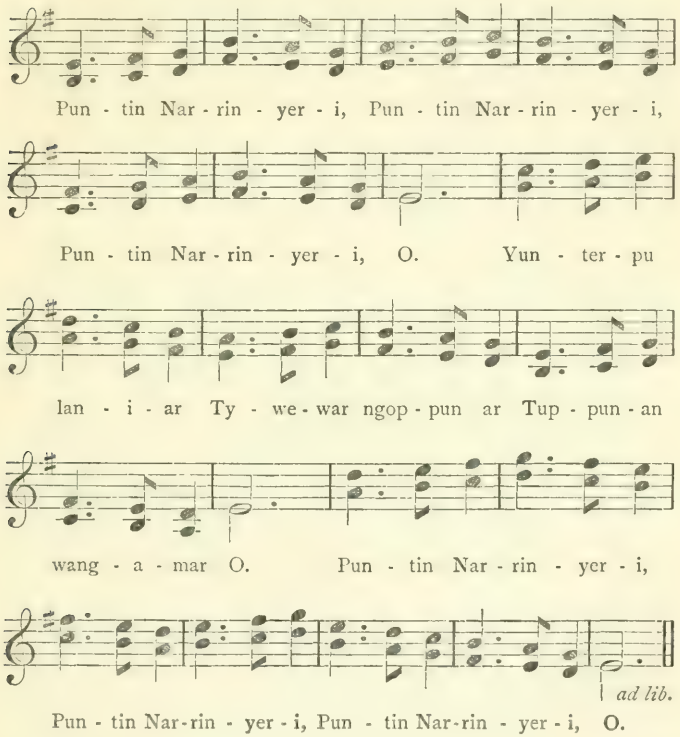
knees bent, then lying down and scratching themselves, and so on. Two men followed the herd, endeavouring to wound them with their spears; this represented the manner in which they were to hunt the kangaroo.

The corroboree, it may be noted, is always performed at night, often by the light of the full moon, supplemented, it may be, by that of a fire. A favourite 'costume' in some parts of New South Wales is to paint in white lines the outline of the ribs, thus giving the dancer the appearance of a skeleton.

Of musical instruments in Australia there is little to say, for the simple reason that there are none, save in the extreme north, where they are probably due to foreign influence. True, they used opossum skins rolled up as a drum, or stretched them between their knees; slapping the hand on a portion of the human body was another method of producing sound by percussion. Two boomerangs struck together, or two sticks struck on the ground, were made to give a note or sometimes two; but these infantile efforts can hardly be termed music; at most they marked a sort of time, which was very perfectly kept by the dancers in the corroboree.

In North Queensland we have a record of a drum of lizard skin, but this is of New Guinea origin, and a shell rattle is equally Papuan in its ancestry, even if it was not traded from New Guinea; the trumpet of Port Essington, which, according to some, was a nose flute, can hardly be put down as a native invention, when we recall the strong Malay influence all along the coast.

Some authorities have recorded the music of a corroboree. Taplin gives the accompanying score for the Narrinyeri dance; the music should be rendered by a couple of clarionets, a flute and a drum for the bass; but the general effect would be too soft; possibly bagpipes would come nearer the right tone.


Pun - tin Nar - rin - yer - i, Pun - tin Nar - rin - yer - i,
Pun - tin Nar - rin - yer - i, O. Yun - ter - pu
lan - i - ar Ty - we - war ngop - pun ar Tup - pun - an
wang - a - mar O. Pun - tin Nar - rin - yer - i,
ad lib.
Pun - tin Nar-rin - yer - i, Pun - tin Nar-rin - yer - i, O.

The only bass notes are a crotchet at the beginning of each bar.

The makers of Australian songs are the bards of the tribes, and they are held in great esteem, not only in their

own tribe, but also among their neighbours: the songs are carried so far that the meaning is lost. The words are believed to be obtained by the bards from the spirits of the dead, sometimes in dreams, sometimes in the waking state.

Dr. Torrance says that much of the character of the music seems to depend on the rhythm, which is very marked but irregular, changing from double to triple time and back again. The intervals seldom exceed a third, and are generally minor.

Some of the songs are dramatic; a Wolgal song which Dr. Howitt describes was a graphic picture of an attempt to cross the Snowy River in a leaky canoe. First of all the canoe was pushed off, then the canoers paddled, but the water gained; and, after an ineffectual attempt to bale it out, the canoe returned to the shore. Then the hole was stopped with adhesive mud, and the performers put off again and paddled across.

It might be imagined from the perusal of the majority of works on the Australian aborigines that they are a people with few or no amusements. But this is probably a complete mistake, if the Queensland aborigines investigated by Dr. Roth are typical of the remainder of the natives.

Although the Australian has never domesticated any animal—for the dingo probably domesticated itself, so far as it can be termed domesticated at all—he, like savage races in many other parts of the world, is fond of pets. Captured animals, rats, bandicoots, frogs, young birds, serve as playthings for young and old. At night they are tied up; and as it never occurs

to their owners that the pets stand in need of fodder of some sort, they soon perish of inanition. An exception is made by young cassowaries and opossums; the former are deprived of their wing feathers and wander about the camp, picking up scraps of food; the wallabies and opossums are not only free of the camp, but wander away for hours. The dingo is usually caught young and tied by the leg till it is reconciled to its surroundings. That the starvation of the other pets is due to indifference is shown by the care taken to keep the young dingo alive. Sometimes a boy is put in charge of them, but more often a woman is deputed to look after them, and she fills the office of wet nurse.

A very important game in Australia is cat's cradle. It was recorded in Victoria more than fifty years ago; we may therefore assume that it is indigenous and not imported by white men. In the Torres Straits Islands it is equally well known, and many of the figures were certainly of native origin. Where cat's cradle was invented, and whether it was invented in more than one place, is unknown, but it is found at many places where there is no reason to suspect the white man of having introduced it. In some districts of North Queensland, where it is universally known, it is a man's game; but more often it is the especial sport of the women and children. Some of the figures are extremely complicated, requiring three pairs of hands in the process of manufacture, and going through eight or nine stages before they are complete; in other cases the mouth, hands, and knees of the player are enlisted. One simple but ingenious

figure represents a man climbing a tree ; a loop passes round the knee, the top end of the figure being held by the fingers of both hands close together, so that the long strings from the knee to the fingers are parallel. After passing the fingers the strings cross one another, pass outside the outer strings, re-enter, and pass outside the outer strings again, the last loop being of such a length that there is no slack between the fingers. By raising the hands gradually the lower loop, which represents the man, is made to slide up the outer strings, giving a movable figure, suggestive of a man climbing a tree. More complicated, and requiring two hands, are the figures of the turtle and tortoise, showing the scales on their back. Any one who wishes to study the game as played in Australia will find all the figures reproduced in Dr. Roth's Bulletin No 4; but unfortunately we are left in the dark as to the stages by which the final result is reached.

Another game, indicative of the Australian's marvellous knowledge of animal life and habits, is that of drawing tracks in the sand. At a very early age he learns to recognise the footprints of the different animals; and it is a favourite amusement, requiring no small skill, to delineate them in the sand. Parallel to the mimetic dances and representations mentioned in the section on corroborees and elsewhere, are the games in which the object is to imitate the movements of some bird or quadruped with the arms or hands, much in the same way, in fact, that a rabbit is thrown on the wall for English juveniles, save that the hand itself and not the shadow has to represent the animal.

To make an emu the mimic covers his or her head with a government or a bark blanket; one hand is held up to represent the head and in the other is a bunch of feathers which does duty for the tail.

Sometimes there is a real game in which the performers play the parts of birds or insects. 'March-fly' is played by one child taking the part of the fly, shutting his or her eyes and running about to try and catch some one; as soon as success attends their efforts, they buzz in the ear of the captive and pinch him in imitation of the insect's sting.

Fearful of evil spirits though they generally are, we find among the children games in which one figures as a bogy. On the Bloomfield River there is a being named Wuinggal, of whom the blacks believe that he sometimes appears as a man, sometimes as a woman; when the latter is the case, she is very beautiful, with a shining skin, as if she had been newly greased; she carries a sharp digging stick, which is supposed to be red hot, and the wound she makes with it never heals. The children pretend that it is night-time and that they are asleep; Wuinggal enters the make-believe camp and searches for her victim, and finally begins to set the camp on fire. Then every one jumps up and helps to capture her. There is another evil spirit, Burakal, who in the game chases his victims and tickles them till they are nearly dead from laughing; then he lets them go.

Games imitative of human actions are naturally very common. The little black boy sets up housekeeping with his *gin*, and sits contentedly in the shade of his

hut. Suddenly another boy rushes up and abducts the wife, exactly as the real Australian wife is abducted; the two boys settle down to a make-believe fight, just as their fathers would settle down to a real one. Another form of playing at houses is to vie with one another in making the preparations for visitors enticing; one boy will have opossum in his hut; a girl will press him to come to hers, making believe to have yams for him; and so on. On Keppel Island a curious game is played, which no white man has ever comprehended; little grotto huts, eight or ten inches high, are built; the builder, a young woman, kneels in front and with each hand alternately throws into the grotto small pebbles, singing as she does so some chant. These pebbles represent father, mother, and children; perhaps it is simplest to regard it as a charm to bring along a husband, though suitors are generally plentiful enough in Australia, where getting married entails no financial responsibility and the wife builds her husband's hut.

Dolls are by no means unknown, though they have been but rarely recorded by writers. From South Queensland come some gum cement figures, probably dolls, moulded into a recognisable representation of a woman. But, like other savage and many civilised children, the Australian lays very little stress on the verisimilitude of her play-child; a forked cane plays its part admirably, for it can be carried round the neck just like a real baby; and with a little manipulation joints, imitative of knees, can be produced in the two legs. Little bags are often made by the parents for

the children to carry these dolls in. Elsewhere pieces of bark are wrapped up in grass to do duty as dolls; girls and women carry cones in their arms on Keppel Island, which they cut from the stem of the grass-tree; but these are more probably of the nature of charms, like the curious-looking dolls sometimes carried by the natives of South Africa, the meaning of which is obvious to the trained eye.

Highly irreverent is the game termed 'papi' at Cape Bedford; it is nothing less than the imitation by naughty little boys of the sound of corporal punishment administered to them by their relative on a suitable portion of the body.

When we bear in mind how large a part of the life of the Australian is taken up with the search for food, it is hardly surprising that the actions of the grown people in hunting, collecting honey, etc., are mimicked by the children. Little girls squat on the ground and place their hands, fingers downwards, one above the other, each bent at the knuckle so that a tree is represented by the pyramid of hands. Then each hand in turn is knocked off from the top downwards; this is felling the tree. Before the last hand is knocked off, each space between the fingers is felt to see if any honey has dropped down into it, for the game represents the search for honey; then the arm of one of the girls is taken to represent the limb in which the honey is, and they ask each other for a tomahawk. One of the players makes a chop at the elbow of the player who does duty for the tree, and when the honey is secured it is put into a trough

represented by the cupped hands; there it is mixed with water, and each bends down to get a taste of the mixture; they agree that it is too sweet, and then more water is added. The reason why the arm is cut off at the elbow and not at the shoulder is curious; the upper part of the limb of a tree which contains honey is forbidden to the women; they have to content themselves with the lower portion where the dirt and drippings are. The game is played by both sexes, and probably the boys vary the procedure here described, to indicate the superior privileges of their sex.

Another game played with a pyramid of hands is catching cockatoos. One hand is left free and makes a dart at the forefinger of the top hand of the pyramid; this is the cockatoo; it is caught between the fore and middle fingers; then the catch is put up to the mouth of the owner of the free hand—which is the spear aimed at the cockatoo—and a click given as a sign that it has been eaten.

More of the nature of athletic sports are the tournaments in which the blacks of some parts of Queensland indulge. The Mallanpara blacks call it the *prun*, and it takes place every seventh or thirteenth day—perhaps to make the period fit in with the phases of the moon. It is important to notice that where these tournaments are held regularly, there are numerals to express the days between four and seven or thirteen, although elsewhere four or five is the limit of the numerals in the Australian languages. The *prun* ground is shifted every two or three months, and is reserved for these

combats and for general corroborees. The tribe on whose territory it lies take up their positions first in the early morning; then the men of other tribes, who have been reminded by a special messenger of the date of the celebration, arrive, the champions in full war-paint, and salute by giving a lusty yell. Sometime in the afternoon the owners of the ground start the performance by letting fly a boomerang or two, or perhaps a spear, into the mob with which they want to have a set-to, or some one may stand out and begin to abuse a man who has done him some personal injury—abducted his wife, and so on—or the whole mob may start the abuse, and so on. If this and more direct challenges fail to provoke a fight, one of the men may go out of the circle and let fly a boomerang among the women and children—a breach of the rules which seldom fails in its effect.

Although real weapons are used—spears, boomerangs, two-handed swords—it is seldom that death results unless one side have determined to take revenge for some real injury. When one mob is weak, fair-play is generally the rule, and another, even hostile mob will join forces with them and make the balance fair. When a man challenges his uncles, however, others stand aloof; the cause of such a combat seems to be that a man fancies his relatives have not been to see him often enough, or have failed to send him presents of game. Fortunately the combat is not very serious; the offending uncle is put in the ring and the nephew whacks at him with a sword, the blows of which are parried with the shield; finally the uncle puts down

the shield and blows on the cheek of his nephew, as a substitute for a kiss.

When evening comes amicable relations are resumed, and the corroboree is the order of the day, or rather night. Although death is sometimes inflicted on an evil-doer, the tournament is essentially a spectacle; it gives the men an opportunity of showing off before the women, and may perhaps owe its origin to the human love of displaying accomplishments before the opposite sex.

Various modes of wrestling are found. In Victoria the shoulders were the point at which they gripped, and each endeavoured to push his adversary down. In Queensland the loins are the *point d'appui*, and the aim is to throw the adversary off his feet; raising him in the air does not count if he comes down on his feet. A tug-of-war is also found on the Upper Batavia River, the rope being a long pole; instead of pulling they push, and it does not seem to demand great exertion.

Not unlike the cockatoo game is the 'bean-tree'; each hand is a bean, and the player who is 'it' gathers each in succession. When all are collected, the next step is to pretend to hide them in the bush, then the other children look for them, of course, in vain; finally the game is ended by the announcement that a flood has come and carried the beans away.

The 'duck' game is a representation of the method of catching ducks by means of a noose, details of which are given for the turkey in the chapter on fowling. The children pass in line before the one

Arunta Children (p. 137)

who is 'it,' who drops a noose in front of one of them, and the latter immediately falls on his or her back, pretending to be dead. When all are caught, the fowler comes up to each in turn and asks where it came from; on getting as an answer 'From Cooktown,' he gives the duck a poke with the stick, and off it scuttles home.

Among the male portion of the juveniles there is naturally no lack of toy weapons. Some of these are made by relatives, some by the little warriors themselves. Toy spears are made from grasses, reeds, rushes, etc.; sometimes they are thrown with the hand, sometimes with the toy wommera or spear thrower, made of split bulrush or a piece of wood resembling the ordinary implement, but on a reduced scale. A curious and interesting method is found west of Burketown; the spear is a straight withe, two or three feet long, and it is thrown by a string coiled round the end. Curiously enough, Yorkshire boys have just the same method of throwing sticks; it is perhaps a relic of the Roman amentum, if it is not an independent invention. The curious thing about the Australian amentum is that it has never, with one possible exception, been found as a man's implement in Australia. In the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, and, in a modified form, in New Zealand, it is well known; but we have no reason to suppose that there was any communication between any of these parts and the north, or any other part of Australia. Perhaps the amentum may yet be found in some part of New Guinea, whence it could have

spread to the other localities. It is, of course, barely possible that the amentum represents an earlier, not a later form of spear thrower; but Melanesia was peopled by a later stock than the assumed Negrito element in Australia, and this supposition does not help us much.

Toy throwing sticks are found all over North-west Queensland, which in shape resemble the boomerang, but are thrown convex edge forwards against a log on the ground, from which, according to Dr. Roth, they rise in the air in a straight direction and revolve in their flight. With the boomerang itself various games are played. In the Cloncurry district a peg is fixed in the ground, and the champion is he who comes nearest it. The Boulia blacks stand one behind the other, each individual resting his hands on the shoulders of the one in front; another man throws the boomerang, and they follow it in its gyrations, endeavouring to escape being hit. A point beyond this is reached by the blacks of the Georgina, who form two parties, each of which in turn tries to hit one of the other team. Both men and boys use the 'cross,' two pieces of wood six to eight inches long, joined by the middles, which will fly like a boomerang.

Ball games seem to be popular in many parts of Australia. In North-west Central Queensland both sexes play; the ball is thrown from one to another, the players trying to catch it while it is still in the air. Their movements resemble to some extent those of a kangaroo, and the game is sometimes called kangaroo-play. In one part of Victoria the ball resembled our

own hollow ones; it was thrown or kicked, and whoever caught it oftenest was the winner. Sometimes the ball was made of a bladder, sometimes of rolled hair, sometimes of opossum skin. The women had a game of ball, but they threw it from one to another. In South-west Victoria the ball was solid, of opossum skin, filled with pounded charcoal, and tied round and round with kangaroo sinews; two sides were chosen, who were selected from opposite phratries, white cockatoo against black cockatoo, and the game consisted in kicking the ball as far as possible. The best player had the privilege of burying the ball till it was wanted on the next day. Unlike some English legislators, the Victorian black can never hope that his skill at football—cricket they had not invented—would ever help him to reach a position of authority in the tribe, as Mr. Dawson informs us.

Other ball games are more like top-spinning, which is also found in parts of Queensland, the top being a gourd or plate of beeswax. A round ball is made of lime, ashes, clay, or some similar material, and spun between the fore and middle fingers, the object of the game being to keep it up as long as possible. Another form of spin-ball or top was made of a gourd through which were passed two strings, which were then knotted; like the slate discs used by English boys, the ball was spun by twisting the string, and then putting tension on it with the hands.

On the Bloomfield and in Victoria the men practised with spears at a disc of bark or the top of a zamia, which was rolled down a clear space. A curious game

in the Boulia district consisted in bowling stones, each side alternately, which the other party endeavoured to intercept with their sticks.

Hide-and-seek, too, was not unknown among the blacks. The object of the hider is to get home before he is caught. Sometimes some small object, such as the lens of a fish's eye, is hidden, and the players have to discover it; the one who finds it then takes it and hides it, usually by picking up a little sand in his fingers, and dropping the lens with some of the sand.

Perhaps the most curious toy of the Australian aboriginal is the *wit-wit*, or kangaroo rat. It is a piece of wood with a coned head and a long thin tail, not thicker than a pipe-stem, twelve to twenty inches long. It weighs less than two ounces. The shorter form is thrown overhand, and in order to make it travel properly it is essential that it should be thrown through the top of a leafy bush some six feet high; it will then traverse an extraordinary distance. Mrs. Stow informs me that a flight of 300 yards has been recorded. The larger form is thrown along the ground; Dr. Roth says that it is thrown overhand, and Dawson agrees with this, saying that it is whirled round the head; but Brough Smyth says that it is thrown underhand, as the similar toy in Fiji is thrown. Brough Smyth says that it was hurled against a hillock, the *wit-wit* being held lightly with the thumb and first two fingers, the others being slightly bent; the thrower turned his back on the mound, held the toy horizontally at a level with the forehead, and wheeling round, threw it downwards upon the hillock which he took care to have some six

yards in front of him. A measured flight covered 220 yards. It does not traverse this distance without touching the ground, but ricochets again and again. Dawson tells us that it was also used for throwing at birds.

CHAPTER VIII

LAW AND ORDER

Tribal governments, headmen, council, meetings of totem-kins. Justice, public and private, pinya; duel, kurdaitcha shoes. Illapurinja. Blood feud, solidarity of kin. War.

A SUPERFICIAL observer would probably see in an Australian tribe nothing more than a number of families roaming the country in search of food, but owing obedience to no one outside their own little circles, if indeed it could be said that obedience was owed to any one. But this view would be a complete mistake. It is true that many customs seem to be observed without any definite sanction other than the dread of magical results of an untoward kind. Dr. Howitt says that he knows no rule which is more implicitly obeyed than that which decrees the avoidance of the mother-in-law; but the nearest approach to personal punishment for a breach of the rule was among the Coast Murring, who expelled the man from their district, and sent the wife back to her parents. This, however, was an isolated case; as a rule, the sanction was a non-human one.

But there are stringent laws which regulate marriage, which restrict the extra-marital intercourse of the sexes, which prescribe what foods a man may not

taste ; and there are penalties for using magic to the hurt of a fellow-tribesman which were equally inflicted by the whole tribe, though, as a rule, the blood feud and punishments for theft of personal property of all sorts, from wives to weapons, was usually a matter of private concern.

Although something like hereditary chieftainship is found in a few tribes, it can hardly be said that the hereditary principle was generally recognised in Australia in deciding the succession to the headship of a tribe or local group. Where there was a tendency to select the son of the late headman, it was modified by the rule that he must have shown himself worthy of the post by attaining distinction as a warrior, orator, or bard. Sometimes several qualifications were demanded of the chief. In the Yuin tribe he had to be a medicine-man, well stricken in years, able to speak several languages, skilful as a fighting man, and qualified to perform the feats of magic which the *gommeras* (headmen) exhibited at the initiation ceremonies.

The word chief is associated with the hereditary principle; it will therefore be more accurate to employ, with Dr. Howitt, the word headman in preference. An idea of the position of a headman can best be given by showing what were the customs of a few representative tribes. The Dieri had headmen (*pinnarus*) of totem groups, who were selected simply by seniority ; but they also had *pinnarus* of the local groups, who were much more important personages, though it did not follow that either *pinnaru* exercised any influence outside his totem-kin or local group.

Collectively, however, the *pinnarus* are the headmen of the tribe, and one of them is superior to the others. Some forty years ago the tribal headman was named Jalinapiramurana ; he is described as a man of polished manners, persuasive eloquence, and skilful in war and magic. He decided disputes, and his decisions were accepted without discussion ; even neighbouring tribes sent presents to him ; these he is said to have distributed among them to prevent jealousy. He presided at the meetings of the *pinnarus*, summoned tribal meetings, sent messengers to his own and neighbouring tribes, gave in marriage women who were not related to him, pronounced decrees of divorce in cases of incompatibility of temper, and arranged the new matrimonial ventures of the divorced couple. He periodically visited the various local groups ; he was a great magician, but would only practise the healing art on the aristocracy of the tribe in the shape of totem *pinnarus*, or his personal friends.

In the southern Wiradjuri there seems to have been no tribal headman ; but each local division, of which three are named as being more important than the others, had its headman, who might also be the head of the class to which he belonged. The office went by election in each division, but a son would inherit the position of his father, if he possessed oratorical or other eminent ability. One of the main functions of these headmen was to summon meetings for the initiation of the young men.

In South-west Victoria, according to Mr. Dawson, each tribe had its chief. His authority was supreme,

and though he consulted with the best men of the tribe, they would not question his decisions if he differed from them. At his death he was succeeded by his eldest son, unless there was some good reason to the contrary; in the interval between the death of the father and the decision of the tribesmen, the best male friend of the deceased took charge of the affairs of the tribe. Failing the son, the eldest or other brother of the dead chief succeeded him. It will be remembered that in parts of West Victoria the huts of the natives were of a more permanent character than are found in most parts of Australia. Corresponding to this material advance, we seem to have a progress towards hereditary rule and stability in government.

Among the Geawe-gal the best man in war would be the principal adviser, and would have authority by consent of the elders. The son succeeded his father, provided he were a capable warrior; but the elders might set aside the authority of the war chief.

In the Kurnai tribe a man's authority increased with years, as it did in the case of most tribes; but even without the advantage of grey hairs he might become a man of note, weighty in council, and a leader in war, if he were gifted with intelligence or courage beyond the common measure. This tribe was peculiar in one respect: the authority of age attached not to men only, but also to women. They were consulted and had great authority in the tribe; they were, equally with the men, depositaries of tribal legends and customs; even in the initiation ceremonies women were in this tribe allowed to take part up to a certain point.

Their position, though not unique in Australia, was certainly higher in this tribe than in the majority of those known to us.

In some of the tribes at least there was a certain amount of ceremonial connected with the chief. In South-west Victoria, when a chief left home, even for a short time, he was accompanied by a friend, and on his return he was met by two 'chamberlains' who conducted him to his hut. Among the Kulin, the headman was accompanied by one or two men when he went out hunting; they carried his spoils, and it was only when the load was heavy that he bore any of it himself. When Collins was attempting to form a settlement at Port Phillip Bay in 1803, they were met by a number of natives, who ran away when a shot was fired over their heads. They soon returned, however, 'with the king, who wore a very elegant turban-crown, and was always carried on the shoulders of the men.' This may, however, as Dr. Howitt points out, mean no more than that he was unable to walk; and from the importance attached to personal prowess in Australian tribes generally, it seems improbable that the headman of these tribes had so far adopted luxurious habits, as to requisition the aid of bearers. Among the Kulin, each headman had a lieutenant who acted as his mouthpiece and always accompanied him.

From the account given above, it will be evident that the headman was not always the primary, and seldom the sole, authority in a tribe. There was also a tribal council of old men. In the Dieri tribe this was composed of heads of totems and local groups,

fighting men, medicine men, and, speaking generally, of old men of standing and importance. This statement of Dr. Howitt's really seems to mean that all old men attend, for he goes on to say that attendance at the Mindari ceremony, the final stage in initiation rites of the Dieri, is the qualification for attendance at, and ultimately for speaking in, the council of men. The matters dealt with are—procuring death by magic, murder, breach of the moral code, offences against tribal customs, revealing the secrets of this tribal council, or revealing to women the secrets of the initiation ceremonies.

The principal headman speaks first and after him the heads of totems. The manner of speaking is the repetition of broken sentences, uttered in an excited and almost frenzied manner, according to Mr. Gason. Those who are in agreement with the speaker repeat his sentences in a loud voice, but no one comments on the remarks till it is his own turn to speak.

In some of the tribes the young men were allowed to stand round and listen to the deliberations, but not to talk or laugh, while they were going on. In the Yuin tribe the front line was assigned to the old men, the *Gommeras* having a place set apart for them; behind the old men were the young men, but they took little part in the proceedings.

These tribal councils must be distinguished from the meetings of the totem-kins found among the Mukjarawaint; they were for the purpose of choosing a new head, and were attended by all the kin, men, women, and children; only the females who had married, and

were with their husbands, were not notified. The old men with their wives formed the front row, the younger men with their wives the next; outside them were the young men and girls, who looked on, but took no part in the proceedings.

We have already seen that there is what we may call public and private justice in Australia; some offences are a matter for the tribal council; of others the individual alone, possibly with his friends, takes cognisance. The procedure in a tribal case was as follows in the Dieri tribe. When a man had been adjudged by the council to have killed some one by evil magic, an armed party, called a *pinya*, is sent out to kill him. The members of this are distinguished by their dress; they have a white band round the head, the point of the beard is tipped with human hair, and red and white stripes form conspicuous body markings. The men do not speak save to put questions as to the whereabouts of the condemned man; knowing the remorseless spirit of the *pinya*, the natives answer these without attempting concealment. When the deed is done, the *pinya* is broken up and each man returns to his home.

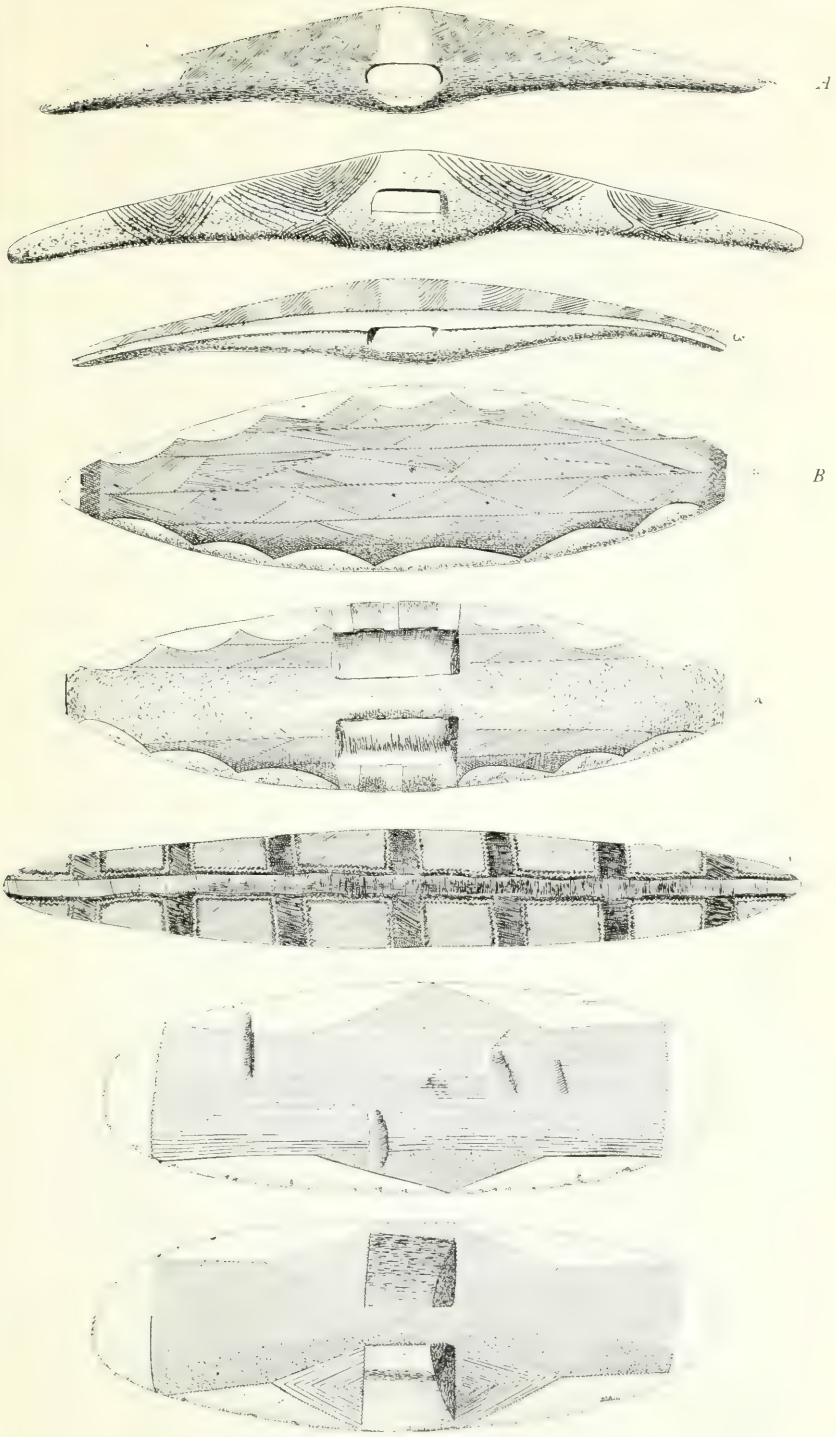
It is interesting to find that there is a form of peace-making which may be substituted for the *pinya*; it consists of the interchange of goods by the relatives of the deceased and those on whom the guilt of blood might fall. Women bring the articles for barter, and these are handed to the members of the other party; if they are not satisfied, they argue, and then follows a regulated combat between all the men present. It

does not appear from Dr. Howitt's account that the blood avengers get the best of the bargain; we cannot therefore regard it as a wergeld, though the underlying principle is not easy to understand, if it did not begin with some such idea.

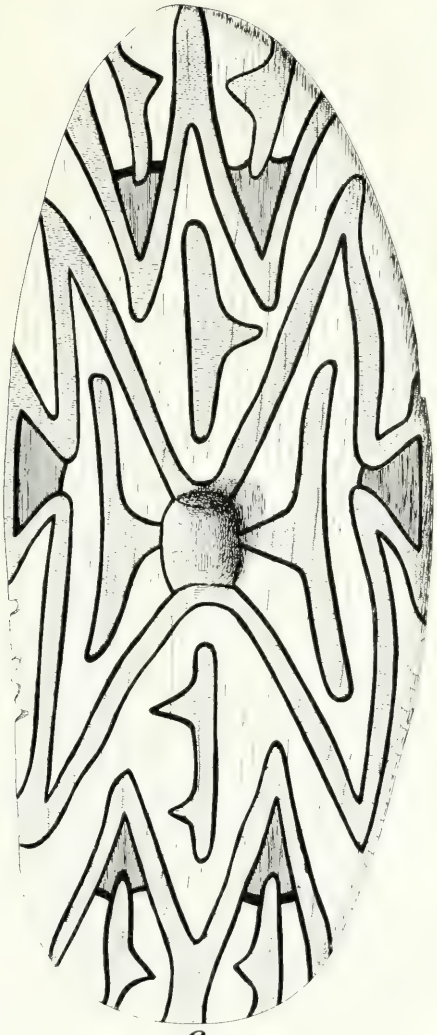
In some cases the tribe as a body does not seem to have concerned itself, but the affair was not, on the other hand, exactly a private matter. In the Kaiabara tribe, when two divisions fell out about some man's crime, a challenge was sent if his own local group supported him; this was done by sending a boomerang-shaped piece of wood, the two ends coloured white, with a shell tied to one of them. The acceptance of the challenge was denoted by keeping the stick and shell; but if the shell was broken on a stone and the stick sent back, it was a sign that they did not feel themselves strong enough to accept the challenge.

Among the Kurnai, when a man was summoned to submit to an ordeal by weapons, he was called a *waitjurk*; all his kindred and the members of his own local group attended him; the challenger was termed *nungi-nungit*, and he was likewise supported by his section of the tribe. An open and level piece of ground was chosen for the meeting, says Dr. Howitt; the two bodies of people assembled, facing one another, some two hundred yards apart. The *waitjurk* stood out in advance of his party, painted with red ochre over his face, with two broad stripes from the shoulders down the breast, where they met horizontal alternating bands of white and red across the stomach as far as the hips on each side. According to the rules, he was armed

with only a shield, or in some cases with a club or a bundle of spears in addition. Some men presented themselves to their adversaries, dancing and twirling their shields in a defiant manner, others crouched down awaiting the attack. Beside the *waitjurk* stood his wife, if he had one, with her digging stick, to help in turning aside or breaking the weapons discharged at him, and at one side of the ground sat the women, beating their rugs in measured time. The body of people stood behind the women, with the old men at hand to observe and direct the proceedings. At a distance of two hundred yards were the aggrieved, who might be a numerous party, including widely ramifying relationships. These men were painted white in token of their kinsman's death. Each man was armed with his shield, a bundle of spears, several boomerangs, and various clubs used for throwing. The women sat in front, drumming on their folded rugs and singing at the same time some song appropriate to the occasion. Then the men and women of the avenging party moved forward by short stages, the males crouching, as if for protection, behind the singers, till they came to a spot about sixty yards from the *waitjurk*. Then the women moved off to one side, and they addressed the murderer, asking why he had slain their kinsman; he replied with a denial of the accusation, whereupon the ordeal opened with a shower of spears. If he escaped them, and his shield were not so full as to be useless, he might also survive the shower of boomerangs which followed; if he still survived, clubs in the shape of a double cone were thrown at him. The *waitjurk*



A. CLUB SHIELDS; *B*. SPEAR SHIELDS (p. 150)



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Queensland Spear Shield (p. 151)

was at liberty to throw spears, if he had them, but his opportunities were few. When he was disabled, he might run for safety, or his friends might interfere; not infrequently a free fight was the conclusion of the proceedings, women as well as men taking part in it; armed with a digging stick, which she wielded like a quarter-staff, a woman was no despicable adversary for a man with club and shield.

The combat over, friendly relations were restored; but sometimes the blood feud spread over the whole tribe, and could not be settled in the way described.

Many offences were dealt with in a more summary fashion than the striking ceremonial just described, which, though the participants are howling savages, leaves an impression of the majesty of the law curiously at variance with the supposed lawlessness of savage peoples.

An erring wife might be clubbed or speared through the leg on the spot by her husband, and no one would take much notice of the incident. Indeed, the injured husband might actually kill her, if he chose to sacrifice a valuable piece of property to an instinct of revenge; and the woman's kin would demand no satisfaction for her death, provided the offence were one for which there was a recognised right of inflicting punishment.

In connection with punishments and avengers the Arunta custom of *kurdaitcha* deserves some notice. The *kurdaitcha* corresponds to the *nungi-nungit*, but he may be either the emissary of the tribal council or a private person. He wears a pair of shoes made of a thick pad of emu feathers, matted together with human

blood drawn from the arm of a young man. On the upper surface is a network of human hair, in the centre of it a hole, and across the hole a strand of human hair. No woman or child may see them. Before a man can wear them he must undergo a painful ordeal; a hot stone is applied to the ball of the little toe of either foot, and the toe is dislocated; the shoe has a small hole in the network through which the toe passes.

On his errand the official *kurdaitcha* is accompanied by a medicine man and two others rubbed over with charcoal. The hair of both men is tied up and decorated with a conical helmet of twigs tied on with hair string. All are decorated with bands of white down, and wear round the waist hair-bands from the head of a distinguished warrior, cut off after his death, to impart to them his warlike qualities. The *kurdaitcha*, sacred stones between his teeth to make his aim infallible, creeps up to his enemy and spears him, then the medicine man takes his place and by his magic ceremonies heals the wound; the victim wakes and returns home to die, ignorant of what is to cause his death.

The medicine man does not accompany the unofficial *kurdaitcha*; the latter allows his enemy to lie in the sun for an hour or two, and then by an incision in his tongue, sucks the blood that is supposed to have accumulated internally; he next plugs the spear wound with the tail of a rat, sings magic songs, and puts a firestick to the wound, with the result that it closes up. Instead of sucking the blood he may put a small lizard into the wound which is said to suck the blood.

Last of all, he bites his victim's tongue or puts a charmed bone under it; the effect of this is that he loses all recollection of what has taken place when he comes to life again, as he does in a short time. He then, as before, returns home to die. The latter part of the account bears a curious resemblance to the results said to be produced by the attack of a wer-animal in the East Indies; there is the same loss of consciousness, failure of memory, and gradual pining away. We may probably explain such cases by the effects of suggestion; the person who supposes himself to have been treated in the way described can find no wound, so he assumes that he cannot recollect the circumstances and that the wound has been healed; expecting to fall sick, he actually compasses his own death, just as the victim of tabu in Polynesia or New Zealand is the victim of his own suggestions.

Corresponding to the *kurdaitcha* is the *illapurinja*, or avenging woman. Her mission seems to be to punish the omission to mourn for the dead. She takes with her a club and a sacred wooden amulet (*churinga*); during her absence her husband sets up one of her digging sticks; he watches this carefully, and if it falls he takes it as a sign that his wife has been killed, and promptly breaks up his camp, leaving only the digging stick behind. The woman endeavours to throw her *churinga* at the victim, and if she hits him on the neck the *churinga* breaks and enters his body. The peculiar feature of this kind of vengeance is that the avenger and the victim both belong to the same group.

Under ordinary circumstances the totem-kin is, as we have already seen, the unit in criminal matters; its solidarity brings it about that by all principles of savage justice you may visit the sins of the fathers upon the children and of the children upon the fathers, provided they happen to have paternal descent in the tribe in question; otherwise it is the mother's brother who sees his nephews suffer for him or suffers in their stead. According to Grey, even children of seven or eight are not exempt from the responsibility of their kin, and when they hear that a murder has been committed, they are said to take their measures accordingly, recognising their position and its consequences like any grown person.

Intertribal feuds began, as a rule, with some offence like those mentioned above, killing by magic or violence, etc., and were settled by duels. There was hardly anything corresponding to a state of war, where armed parties went into battle intending to kill as many adversaries as possible; the judicial combats ended, as a rule, in a reconciliation. Sometimes, however, as in Finnegan's account of Moreton Bay, where among others two women fought a duel with digging sticks, foul play would bring about a general engagement; this was conducted by lines of skirmishers. When one party got the worst of it, they retired from the field in a body; even in this case, however, the defeated tribe returned in the evening, flayed the bodies of their dead, and travelled some distance with the skins before finally disposing of them; it could not, therefore, have been more than a temporary state

of hostilities, for the enemy had evidently left the scene.

In Central Australia the formation of the warriors advancing and throwing their spears with the wommera is described as crescent-shaped. But with these exceptions there is little information as to the nature of a general engagement.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Phratries, classes, male and female descent. Four- and eight-class tribes. Totem-kins. Origin of these arrangements. Results of change to male descent. Local exogamy.

IT has been mentioned in the chapter on language that the tribal areas are small; they are, in fact, sometimes no more than thirty miles in diameter. By 'tribe' is meant a number of people who occupy a definite tract of country, who recognise a common relationship—save where, as sometimes occurs, a man has joined a tribe by marrying a member of it or by simply transferring his residence—and speak a common language or dialects of it. Among the natives themselves the tribe usually has a name; this is sometimes the word for 'man,' the neighbours being the 'wild blacks,' to whom cannibalism and other enormities are commonly imputed. Sometimes, especially in the east, the name of the tribe seems to have been taken from the word 'yes' or 'no'; the well-known Kamilaroi tribe, for example, uses 'kamil' for 'no,' and Pikumbul says 'pika' for 'yes.' These names may, it is clear, have been imposed from without and probably were; the 'man' names, on the other hand, were adopted by the tribesmen themselves.

Above the tribe, but not recognised by the blacks with any specific name, comes what may conveniently be called the nation, that is to say, a group of tribes speaking, as a rule, allied languages, and banded together for the performance of initiation ceremonies and for other purposes. The numbers of the different tribes naturally varied within very wide limits. The little Eucla tribe at the head of the Great Australian Bight could only muster between thirty and forty, all told, but elsewhere two hundred or two hundred and fifty was about the total. Where food was plentiful, as near Lake Alexandrina, five or six hundred natives would spend a great part of the year; but it does not appear how far they were all of the same tribe; in fact, the term is often loosely used, and the statements of many travellers as to tribes must be taken to refer to what are more properly termed local groups.

As to the total number of tribes, it is difficult to do more than give an approximation, based on the assumed size of the tribal area or other uncertain data; for within the tribe proper exist sometimes large local divisions, not real local groups, which often figure on maps and prevent any count of the tribes by simple reference to the map. If the tribal area is 1000 square miles, the total number would be between two hundred and fifty and three hundred. In the same way, if 150,000 may be taken as the number of the blacks at the time of the discovery of Australia, making allowance for the existence of some large tribes, we reach about the same result; but in either case it must be regarded as merely a rough estimate.

The tribe is organised in two distinct ways, which may coalesce under the influence of certain conditions, but are not necessarily connected in any way; these are the local and the social organisations. It has been mentioned above that each tribe lays claim to a certain area, inside which no stranger may hunt without permission. Encroachment of any sort is the signal for hostilities, and not only hunting rights but even property in water is claimed by the aboriginal sovereign owners of the soil. Within the tribe are local groups, and below them again are practically family groups in our sense of the term, but including several generations; these occupied small areas of perhaps ten miles' 'radius' according to Dr. Howitt; but as there were many in the tribal area, and the latter was only some fifty miles in radius, it is possible that there has been some error on the part of his informant. The family groups, as distinguished from the lesser local groups, do not always seem to lay claim to any special area, but hunt in common with other members of the same local group. It must be understood that only in very rare cases was the local group sedentary. As a rule, the Australian native does not erect permanent huts, and his sojourn on any one spot is regulated by the available supply of food. When the *bunya-bunya* nuts were ripe hundreds congregated and remained in company, but this was only once in three years. At other times they may be pictured as roaming the country for food.

More important in many respects than the local organisation are the social regulations of the tribe. In

practice they are of the utmost simplicity; but their explanation in words is a matter of some difficulty owing to their complexity, when we give a conspectus of the organisation of the tribe instead of approaching the question, as is the case in practical life, from the standpoint of the individual, for whom the whole matter in many cases simply resolves itself into the question 'May I marry this woman?' Each tribe, with few exceptions, is divided (1) into two great classes, here called *phratries*; (2) these are again subdivided over a large part of Australia—in New South Wales and Queensland into four subdivisions; in Northern Territory into eight subdivisions, here called *classes*. Forming subdivisions of the phratry and cross-divisions with the classes, we have (3) the *totem-kins*.

Before we proceed to explain the working of these organisations, it will be well to say something on the question of descent. It is naturally all-important to know how membership of a tribe, a phratry, a class, or a totem-kin are determined; not only so, but the different ways of reckoning descent, taken in conjunction with marriage customs, produce, as will be seen later, important modifications in fundamental matters. Under ordinary circumstances the wife removes to the tribe of her husband and joins, in addition, his local group; of course she may belong to the same tribe as her husband, and usually does; in this case she simply removes to his local group. There is nothing in the marriage regulations of most tribes to prevent marriage within the local groups, and in this case no change of residence is effected; but the complexity of

the regulations affecting the choice of wives must, in many, if not most tribes, make it extremely difficult to find a partner among the comparatively few unappropriated women of marriageable age who are to be found at any one time within its limits.

Whether the wife can properly be said to join the husband's tribe or not is unimportant; probably she does. The important point is that the children of a marriage belong to the tribe in which the parents reside, however descent be reckoned for other purposes. The result of this is that the hunting-grounds of a tribe descend from generation to generation in the male line; and all the males resident within the tribal area are interested in protecting the tribal rights.

When we turn to the descent of the phratry, the class, and the totem-kinship, the regulations are much more variable. The first more often 'follows the distaff,' that is, the son takes the phratry name of his mother, but in a considerable proportion of tribes he takes the phratry name of his father. Thus a man of the phratry Eagle-hawk has a wife of the phratry Crow; if male descent is the rule in that tribe, their children are Eagle-hawks; if, on the other hand, they have female descent, the children are all Crows.

For the classes a more complicated rule exists. Whether descent be reckoned in the female or the male line, the children do not take the same class name as the parent, whose phratry name they bear, if there is one, but they take a class name from the same phratry—the other one, where there are only four classes in all.

When we come to the totem-kins, we find that there

is a third possibility; not only may the child follow the father or the mother, according as male or female descent prevails, but he may also take his totem name from neither of them in a certain number of tribes in Central Australia, among all of which male kinship is, so far as phratry or class names go, the rule.

The question of whether female or male descent is the more primitive way of reckoning descent has been fiercely debated, and Dr. Frazer has recently broken out in a new line by maintaining that neither is primitive, inasmuch as the totem name was originally not hereditary at all. The majority of competent authorities, however, are of the opinion that female descent preceded male descent, and Dr. Frazer stands alone in regarding non-hereditary totemism as the original stuff from which all tribes in the world, a few in North Australia excepted, have developed hereditary totemism. It may be remarked in passing that this view of Dr. Frazer's hangs together with his belief in the primitive character of the Arunta institutions, in which he is again almost without adherents in the learned world. It is a curious fact that whereas many arguments have been advanced by those who disbelieve in the primitiveness of the Arunta, none of them have been controverted by the other side. On the other hand, no proofs of the Arunta primitiveness have been advanced by Dr. Frazer and his single supporter; consequently the debate, up to the present, has been a trifle one-sided; none the less the believers in Arunta primitiveness adhere stoutly to their view.

We may now return to the phratries and see how

the system works. With the exception of a few tribes on the seacoast, who have no class divisions, all Australian tribes are divided into the above-mentioned classes, or into phratries, or into both. A study of the arrangement of the classes makes it clear that they originated later than the phratries ; and though in some tribes with classes no phratry names can now be found, it is clear that they have been lost, rather than that they have never existed. There is in the northern part of Central Australia a large group of tribes with male descent ; the classes in these tribes are arranged in two groups ; in some cases there are phratry names ; in some only the phratry organisation has survived ; but it is a legitimate inference that where it has not survived, it once existed. There is absolutely no reason to suppose that phratries were created in the other cases ; and there could be no object whatever in creating them, for the classes alone, where they exist, perform exactly the same functions as the phratry-cum-class organisation. It is abundantly clear, in fact, from a careful examination of the material, that the class organisation has been superposed on the phratry organisation, and really supersedes it.

Where they can be translated, the phratry names are found to be those of animals, very often of birds. Over a large part of Victoria and New South Wales, as I show in another work, the names in use are Eagle-hawk and Crow. Another common name for a phratry is cockatoo ; but in the majority of cases we are unable to translate the names, partly, no doubt, because these names are to some extent sacred names, which have

either never belonged to the common vocabulary of the tribe, or have long ceased to belong to it. Another reason is that it seems certain that both phratry names and organisation were borrowed; but if the names were borrowed, it is clear that our search for the meaning of the name is hopeless unless we can hit upon the tribe in which it originally had a meaning; and it is quite possible that that tribe has ceased to exist, even if it has not begun to use another word for the quadruped or bird originally designated by the phratry name.

The origin of the phratry names is still an unsolved problem; in fact the only attempt that seems to come near the mark is that recently made by Mr. Andrew Lang, and even his theory is far from accounting for the peculiarities of distribution and nomenclature. Mr. Lang's theory is that men originally lived in isolated groups, ruled over by an old male, exactly as a herd of cattle is ruled. This involved the exclusion of the young males, for the whole of the adult female population of the group formed the harem of the old male. Then in process of time it became possible for the young males to remain within the group, which was thus immensely strengthened for offence or defence, but only on condition that they went abroad for their wives. As time went on, this rule, imposed by the old male, crystallised into an instinct, and, the rights of the old male falling into decay at the same time, there arose the law that no one might marry within the group in which he was born. Now, if it was the custom for all the women of a group to be carried

off by its neighbours, and for women of neighbouring groups to be introduced in their place, feelings of friendship, or at any rate amicable exchange of women rather than robbery, could not fail to spring up somewhere or other. When two or more groups were thus formally or informally allied, they naturally found themselves in a much better position than their neighbours, much of whose energy was expended in wife hunting ; not only so, but this alliance ensured to the men in either connubial group the pick of the women in the other. Altogether it was a very convenient arrangement, and other neighbouring groups could hardly fail to follow the example once set.

Now at the present day in Australia we find tribes, as has been shown in the chapter on language, whose names are clearly derived from those current, not in the tribe itself, but among those who were in frequent contact with it. Other tribes have names derived from animals ; and the same is true of the local groups into which many of the tribes are divided. Some of these local groups are named, as Dr. Haddon's theory requires, from the animal which forms a staple article of diet among them. In other cases there is no obvious origin of this sort. But Mr. Lang has shown that nicknames are as common among peoples of lower culture as they are in England or France, where we find many village names derived from animals—nicknames, of course, not Ordnance Map names. Applying these facts to the origin of group names in primitive times, Mr. Lang conjectures that the early groups were known to their neighbours by

nicknames, chiefly or entirely derived from animals. Some of these stuck, and the people ended by adopting them. Then came the development of connubial alliances; and of course the two groups which led the way were likely to spread their names as well as their organisation. If these two original groups were Eagle-hawk and Crow, it is therefore not difficult to see how these two phratry names came to have so wide extension in Victoria and New South Wales.

The original rule was that the name of the group was borne by all who lived within it; later this was modified; but before we go into the question of how this affected the organisation, it is necessary to discuss another portion of Mr. Lang's theory, and this will be more intelligible in connection with the question of totemism, later in the present chapter.

We now return to the social organisation and its working. The effect of the phratry organisation is to limit the choice of any given person in matrimonial matters to one-half of the members of the opposite sex in his own tribe. Other regulations, it is true, still further limit his choice, but we may neglect these for the present. With the introduction of classes, the field of choice is again narrowed; each class is half of a phratry and only one-fourth, or, in eight-class tribes, one-eighth, of the other sex in the tribe are in the matrimonial market for any given person. The working of the organisation will be more intelligible if we take a concrete example. In the well-known Kamilaroi tribe of Northern New South Wales, there are two phratries, Dilbi and Kupathin, the names of which

cannot be translated. Dilbi is divided into classes, Kumbo and Ippai; Kupathin into Muri and Kubi; these class names are those in use for males. The corresponding female names are Butha, Ippatha, Matha, and Kubotha. The ordinary rule is that Kumbo must marry Matha, Ippai takes to wife Kubotha, and so on. Now it is a peculiarity of the class system that only very exceptionally does the child take the class name of the parent; it is usually the sister class in the same phratry whose name is borne by the child. This is the case in the tribe under consideration. The child of Kumbo and Matha is not a Muri or Matha, but a Kubi or Kubotha; the child of an Ippai is a Muri or Matha; thus it comes about that in any family alternate generations belong to the same class, but all belong to the same phratry.

The rule of the eight-class tribes is more complicated, and, in addition, their classes descend by indirect male descent, as do also some of the four-class tribes, instead of by indirect female descent, as in the Kamilaroi. The class names of the northern Arunta are Panunga, Uknaria, Bulthara, Apungata, Purula, Ungalla, Kumura, Umbitchana. A male Panunga marries a female Purula; their children are Apungata, who in turn marry Umbitchana; their children are again Panunga. If, however, Apungata is a female and Umbitchana a male, the children are no longer Panunga but Ungalla; the children of Ungalla are Umbitchana or Bulthara, according to whether Ungalla is male or female; and so on.

Various hypotheses have been proposed as an ex-

planation of the origin of classes. One effect of the existence of phratries is to prevent brothers and sisters from intermarrying; and this has been put forward as the original reason for creating phratries. In the same way it has been pointed out that the effect of classes is to prevent parents and children from intermarrying. But, in the first place, we have no evidence that there ever was such a thing as brother and sister marriage. As to the classes, the marriage of one of the parents with his or her children was already barred by the phratry system; and it is highly improbable that such an arrangement should be introduced when the same result could be attained by simply enacting that no parent might marry a child. There is more to be said for the view, that the object was to prevent marriage between people of different generations, not related by blood. At the present day, of course, old men marry young women, for time has brought it about that the Muri and Matha, for example, who started by being one generation, perhaps, have now spread themselves out, so to speak, and are of all ages between the cradle and the grave. We seem to get a clue to the original meaning of the classes in a regulation of some of the non-class tribes, to be dealt with in the chapter on marriage, which enacts that a man must marry his mother's elder brother's daughter. Traces of the same influence are seen in the southern Arunta organisation, which, although nominally only four-class, is in practical working equivalent to eight-class organisation; for each class is divided into two sections, and a man may only marry into one section of his lawful

class. The women of a class are divided into 'elder sisters' and 'younger sisters,' and the relations of a man with his elder and younger sisters are regulated by different ceremonial rules. It seems, therefore, probable that the same tendency may have manifested itself in the phratry; this would give rise to a custom of choosing wives from one-half of the opposite phratry, and this custom would later crystallise into the class system.

To the phratry and class systems is added another organisation—the totem-kins. But whereas the classes are never cross divisions with reference to the phratries, the kins are almost always so with reference to the classes, and in some of the central tribes are so with regard to the phratries also; but this latter seems to be simply a sport. It does not follow that the totem-kins are always regulative of marriage; in some tribes they seem to have disappeared. Where they exist they may coexist with phratries or with classes, or with both, and may supersede the phratry arrangements, or modify the class arrangements. Thus, in Victoria and among the Dieri, totem-kins are found in the phratries, so arranged that no kin is found in both phratries; marriage is regulated simply by the rule of exogamy (marrying *outside* the phratry). Among the Urabunna, on the other hand, they seem to supersede the phratry organisation, for one totem-kin may not intermarry with any and every totem-kin of the opposite phratry; each is limited to one kin. In many of the four-class tribes the class rule is alone effective; but among some of the tribes with Kamilaroi organisation, the totem-

kins too regulate marriage, so that each class marries only certain kins of the lawful class, or certain kins of two or more classes. This is a complete overthrow of the system, and need not be discussed here.

It is now time to return to Mr. Lang's hypothesis of the origin of phratries. We have seen that two groups probably came to an amicable arrangement with regard to marriage. After a time the custom grew up of denominating the children of any woman by the name of the group from which she originally came. When the original local groups became what we have called phratries—that is to say, bodies of people without local habitations, distinguished from their fellows only by a name, it became necessary to arrange the sub-groups (which had sprung up within the original local groups as a result of reckoning the descent of the child through the mother, so far as group allegiance was concerned), so that each was wholly within one phratry, instead of being distributed at random through the local groups. When this process had been completed the totem-kins had come into existence. Totemism has another side to it, but we are only concerned with it at the present juncture as a social organisation. From what has been said above, it might be supposed that the totem-kin was of very slight social importance in such tribes as do not regulate marriage on totemic grounds. But this is very far from being the case. Like the descent of phratries and classes, the totem-kin of the child is determined by that of one or other parent in most cases; if the child follows its mother in its phratry, it also takes the

mother's totem and belongs to the mother's totem-kin. This involves the assumption of very important obligations; for the totem-kin is really for many purposes the social unit, far more so, in fact, than the local group, which, as we saw at the outset of the chapter, forms a cross organisation to the social systems we are now considering. Members of the totem-kin hang together, and if a member of the totem-kin emu has done you an injury, it is by no means necessary to seek out that identical individual in order to exact your pound of flesh. By every principle of savage justice you are entitled to satisfy your thirst for revenge on the person of the first man of the kin on whom you can lay hands.

In an account of the social organisation of the Australians it is impossible to omit all mention of the Arunta and other central tribes, anomalous though they are. Whereas in other tribes the totem-kin is confined to one or other phratry, in these tribes it is found in both, though there is a tendency for it to predominate in one. Most authorities hold that the present condition has arisen from an earlier one in which the normal Australian arrangement was in force. Among the Arunta the totem-kins tend to coincide with the local groups; there may be many kangaroo groups, of course, but all kangaroo people in them are of the same totem-kin.

It has been mentioned more than once that descent is reckoned through the mother in some tribes, through the father in others. The results of the change are so important as to merit some examination here. Under ordinary circumstances the local group consists of

people of the same family; but the sons follow the totem of the mother. In an inter-kin quarrel they are not on the side of the father, and in warfare may even be opposed to him. But when the descent is reckoned through the father, this is all changed; it is the mother who is of different totem to the rest of the family. The local group is permanently of the same totem, and the larger local aggregations, which may perhaps be termed hordes, tend to eliminate the weaker totem-kins and become local totem groups of the kin which we find among the Narrinyeri, who have discarded the phratry and class systems and practise local exogamy.

The same result tends to come about in the case of the phratries. In the Warramunga tribe, for example, the Uluuru moiety is in the south, the Kingilli in the north, and the same state of things existed in Victoria. Another result, perhaps, of the change may have been an impetus to the movement in the direction of hereditary chieftainship; this is by no means the rule in Australia, the chief being, as we have seen, often elected and chosen for his skill in war or the chase, or for some other reason; it is therefore important to observe how far a change in the reckoning of descent has been accompanied by any progress towards primogeniture, both in inheritance of the chieftainship and in other matters. Unfortunately, points of this sort have been almost uniformly neglected by writers on the customs of the natives, and it is only rarely that we find any mention of inheritance or of personal property of any sort beyond weapons and other movables.

A stage beyond the totem exogamy of the Narrinyeri is reached, perhaps, in the local exogamy of the Kurnai. The Kurnai occupy Gippsland; but they have probably entered that area in comparatively recent times. Whether their unusual organisation is due to this or to other causes cannot be discussed here; the important point for our present purpose is that the local exogamy of the Kurnai is exactly what we should find, if the phratry organisation had given place to totem organisation, and this to mere naming of groups after localities.

CHAPTER X

MARRIAGE

Exchange of sisters, betrothal. Polygamy. Courtship. Elopement. Wife-lending. Pirrauru. Infanticide. Birth, childhood, naming. Kinship, classificatory system, avoidance of relatives, etc.

IN the chaper on social organisation, details have been given of the rules by which an Australian is bound, when he goes forth to look for a wife. She must be of the right division of the tribe or of the right locality; disregard of these rules means death, probably for both parties, certainly for the man in the majority of tribes. In some, however, the force of the old rules has been so undermined that people of the same phratry and the same class are allowed to intermarry; the Kamilaroi have some of these anomalous marriages. Ipai (m) with totem, emu or bandicoot, may take to wife Ipatha (f) with totem black snake. Kubi, kangaroo or opossum, may marry Kubbitha iguana, and so on. It is the totem which is kept in view, and the class and phratry rules only prevent Ipai from marrying Muri and Kumbo. That these rules should persist when the other class regulations are falling into decay; in other words, that a man should be prevented from marrying out of his own generation, when the rules as to marriage with women

who in other tribes would be his sisters, is relaxed, is to some extent an additional argument in favour of the view of the origin of classes defended above. Even where there are no recognised classes, the phratry alone does not regulate marriage. In the Urabunna tribe, for example, a man must marry his mother's (tribal) elder brother's daughter; in the Dieri tribe he must take to wife his maternal grandmother's brother's daughter's daughter; in other words, descendants in the female line of a brother and sister must marry.

The process of acquiring a bride differs in different tribes; she may be exchanged for a sister, the simplest and perhaps the commonest form; she may be betrothed at, or even, provisionally, before, birth, but this is usually part of a process of barter; she may be abducted, either from an already existing, or a prospective husband, or from her relatives; or she may be inherited from a brother or tribal kinsman.

Even where a bride is acquired by betrothal, the wedding ceremonies are somewhat ungentle, far more so those where a wife is abducted, possibly against her will. When the bride is obstreperous, the affianced husband is fully justified by the customs of the aborigines, in taking his club and whacking her on the head with it till she faints or submits; and many accounts of the beginning of the honeymoon make mention of these connubial endearments; so that it can hardly be a rare occurrence for a bride to suffer chastisement early in her married life. This is easily understood when it is explained that, whereas the bride may number some thirteen summers, the husband will be

A QUEENSLAND BELLE (p. 175)

at least thirty and perhaps sixty, with several previous matrimonial investments still on his hands; for if a man can get them and keep them, there is no bar to his having as many wives as he likes. When the bride is very young, she often remains away from her husband, probably with her mother, for months at a time; but while she is with him he is obliged to provide her with animal food, although she on her side is relieved to some extent of the usual burden of collecting vegetable food sufficient in quantity for the wants of herself and her husband, her tender years being mercifully taken into account. If his little bride pleases him, a husband will show her attention by rubbing her with fat at frequent intervals; this is considered to be a good cosmetic, and, besides, has the reputation of making her grow quickly, and, what is much more important, of making her grow fat, a quality which is prized above all others in women so much so, that a lady with a certain embonpoint will always be a prize in the matrimonial market, whatever her age, or however deficient she may be in good looks, from our point of view.

Where a wife is acquired at a maturer age, she has equally little voice in the selection of her husband, unless she choose to run away with him. The father, mother, brothers, uncles, or other relatives dispose of the hands of marriageable maidens, and from their decision there is no appeal. Courting is naturally not a conspicuous feature in the life of the Australian native. Some curious customs are recorded, but they are exceptions. Russell, for example, says that in

South Queensland in the forties, it was *de rigueur* for the young man to make his advances from a tree, but this stands almost alone. A quaint method of courting was in vogue among the Kurnai; in some tribes there were two sacred animals, one for the men, the other for the women; they were Emu-wren and superb warbler for the Kurnai, and when the young men were backward, the women would kill one of the 'men's brothers,' and casually let the men see it; then the young men got angry and armed themselves with sticks; the women did likewise, their implements being the indispensable digging sticks; a fight followed, and many heads were broken. On the next day the young men retaliated by killing a 'women's sister'; then followed a worse fight than before. When the wounds and bruises had begun to heal, a young couple who were not indisposed to make a match of it would meet; the young man would say '*Djiitgun* (superb warbler)'; the girl would answer '*Yiirung* (emu-wren), what does the emu-wren eat?' The young man would name some animal, and the match was arranged.

When a couple eloped, whose union did not violate the marriage regulations of a tribe, they were pursued. Among the Yuin of New South Wales, if they were caught, the girl would be beaten by her kindred, and the man would have to meet in single combat the girl's father, brothers, and mother's kindred. When he has been knocked down four times or has overcome all his assailants, the feud is at an end; but unless he had been so lucky as to knock his men down, the girl would probably be taken from the man; in any case

he had to find a (tribal) sister to give in exchange for her.

Like many other peoples in the lower stages of culture, the Australians were accustomed to lend their wives to strangers on festive occasions or during ordinary visits. They might even agree to exchange wives for a month. A development of these customs is found among the Dieri and a few other tribes; the position was regularised; the subsidiary wives and husbands were assigned in due form and tribal recognition given to the union. The lawful husband was the *tippa-malku*, or first husband of a woman, as long as he was in the camp, save at certain tribal gatherings. When he was on a journey or detained on business, the senior *pirrauru* husband succeeded to his rights. Provided he was initiated, any man might have a pirrauru wife; but it was indispensable for a woman to have a tippa-malku husband before she invested in any pirraurus.

Although, owing to infanticide, the number of children reared was probably small, there is no reason to suppose that the blacks, who are dying out fast, thanks to European vices, are at all unprolific; the largest family on record was borne by a woman named Jenny, a Victorian, who was the proud possessor of thirteen olive branches. Twins were rare, but not unknown; three children at a birth have been known.

There were various causes for infanticide; in some cases it is said to have been the custom to kill a woman's first child; in others the child was troublesome to carry, especially if there were other young

children. In times of scarcity children naturally suffered with the adults, and showed more signs of their privations; their condition was put down to the influence of magic, and they were set outside the camp to die. Near Adelaide the children were regularly eaten in times of famine; very occasionally the sacrifice of a child seems to have been part of the ceremonies attendant on the initiation of a medicine-man.

Like other women who live in a state of nature, the Australian mother makes little of the pains of child-birth; in fact, ceremonial rules apart, which, however, are not important in Australia, there is nothing to prevent her from bringing her child back to the camp, as soon as she has washed it, perhaps with the aid of an old woman, in a neighbouring creek. Children are carried in various ways; in South Australia the large mat, in other parts the opossum rug on the back serves as a pouch in which to put the child. When it can hold on, it sits astride her shoulder or on her hip; as we have seen in the chapter on canoes, it may hold on by her hair. There are no patent foods for native children, and they are consequently weaned late, perhaps at the age of four or five, though before this they have begun to forage for themselves. Kissing is unknown to the aboriginal; the black mother places her lips on the child and blows.

When the child begins to move about, it will go on all-fours, or on its hands and knees occasionally; but a characteristic mode of progression is for it to drag itself along in a sitting position with its hands and

Arunta Boys (p. 178)

heels. When it begins to run, it turns its toes out very markedly.

Up to the age of about seven boys and girls play together and are not separated in any way. Then the boy begins to receive instruction in manly arts; he leaves the society of girls and sleeps in the bachelors' camp, and in some cases undergoes the first of a long series of initiation ceremonies then or soon after. The girls have already been learning women's work, but now their instruction begins in real earnest; hut-building, net-making, thread- and line-making, food-collecting, all female accomplishments are acquired, one by one.

The treatment of children is universally kind, indeed the Australian parent is foolishly indulgent in the view of those who follow Solomon's maxim; for they never chastise their children; at most in Queensland the maternal grandmother applies the palm of her hand in a way not unknown in more civilised communities.

In some parts children are named from some circumstance connected with their birth; in others the choice of the name depends on some magical performance. Sometimes they are named after animals, and then there may be a rule prohibiting them from killing or eating the animal from which they take their name. Girls are usually named once for all; but boys often receive another name from the father as soon as they begin to toddle about. In Gippsland a man had one name for daily use, and a second secret name, owing to the belief that the knowledge of a man's name gave his enemies power over him. Another cause of a

change of name is the death of a person of the same name; it could not possibly be allowed that the name of the dead should be used; he would think that the living were not mourning for him and trouble them in their dreams, if he did not appear to them.

In some parts, especially South Australia, there was a custom of naming children according to the order in which they were born, whether these were real names or only in addition to ordinary names. In the Wakelbura tribe in Queensland the father used the names of the four fingers and the thumb to designate his children, whether male or female. In South Australia there were different names for girls and boys; we may therefore conclude that they were real names. Cerstaecker says that another name was added soon, which was retained till marriage and the birth of the first child. This brings us to a curious custom, not particular to Australia—that of naming a parent after the child. If a child was called Kadli, the father would be in South Australia Kadlitpinna, the mother Kadlinganki; after the birth of each child they changed their names. When a man had grey hair, his name would be Kadliburka, and when he joined the ranks of the old men, his name would be taken from land which he owned, as for example, Muliakiburka (old man of Muliaki).

Civilised nations are accustomed to use what is technically called the descriptive system of relationship; most people in the lower stages use what is termed the classificatory system. Properly speaking, this does not refer to relationship in our sense at all, and it will be convenient to distinguish between

(1) consanguinity, (2) relationship (as we understand it), and (3) kinship; these terms will be used here in this way: birth settles a man's consanguinity, and marriage his relationship; his kinship is also settled, in a way, by birth, but it is birth in a given community or in a given generation which is the essential point, not birth within a given family.

The Australians do actually recognise consanguinity, but they have not always a name for the consanguine person; a man calls his mother, for example, by the same name in most tribes by which he addresses all the women whom his father might lawfully marry. We are here concerned, however, more especially with the third of these classes of terms. It must be borne in mind, in endeavouring to understand the system, that each name is applied, not to one person only, but to a group of persons. These are roughly sorted according to sex and generation, sex and phratry, with subsidiary distinctions of relative age. The Dieri marriage rule is of much importance, as will be seen in causing the use of different terms for persons of the same sex, generation, and phratry. Arranging three generations according to phratries and sexes, we have the following twelve names in use if a male is speaking. Sometimes the same is used for two generations.

PHRATRY A.

Wife's father (1)	(Self)	
Mother's brother (2)	Brother (4)	Daughter's husband (1)
	Sister (6)	Sister's child (7)
Mother (3)	(*i.e.* real or mother's	
Mother's sister (3)	sister's child)	

Phratry B.		
Wife's mother (7)	Wife's brother (10)	Child (12)
Father (8)	Wife's sister (11)	
Father's brother (8)	(*i.e.* Mother's brother's child)	
Father's sister (9)		

In order to make the table more intelligible I have used English names, but it must be understood that the person to whom the English name applies is an individual or series of individuals in one family, while these to whom the Dieri man applies the names are the whole of these three generations in his tribe. All males in his phratry are brothers or mother's sister's sons (*i.e.* cousins). All the females are sisters or cousins. So in the opposite phratry, all are brothers and sisters of his wife. In the next generation in Phratry A all are his daughter's husbands or his sister's children. In Phratry B all are his children, or, what is the same thing, his brother's children.

Save that daughter's husband and sister's child are distinguished, all are own or wife's brothers or sisters. True, names are used for sisters and brothers according to their relative age, but that is a mere detail. It will be admitted that the system is admirable in its simplicity, but there are many who do not understand it, even among professed students of anthropology, if one may judge by their writings.

Where we get four or eight classes the terminology gets more complicated, but it is enough to have explained the simple case. We may now go on to discuss one of the most mysterious of savage customs—the avoidance of the mother-in-law.

As a matter of fact, a man, or woman, avoids a good many more people, and in Australia the rule of avoidance does not apply to the actual mother-in-law only, but to all the women who might have been mothers-in-law to the man in question. Among the Arunta the father must avoid the daughter, the brother his younger sister; on the other hand, the elder sister may converse with him, and he is always at liberty to talk to his own mother.

Rules of avoidance govern the social arrangements of the camp, and no doubt have much to do with the arrangement of the camping-grounds described on p. 75. The meeting-ground of the men is forbidden to women, that of women to men. When the head of the family belongs to the Panunga class (p. 166), only men of two classes out of the four—Panunga and Bulthara—may visit his camp; when the man himself is away, women of his own class, Panunga, are at liberty to come; Bulthara women may on no account come near it. Conversely, Kumara and Purula women may talk to Panunga and Bulthara men.

These by no means complete the list of avoidances. In some tribes a man must avoid the woman whom he is going to marry as well as her mother, that is, of course, as long as they are unmarried. In Queensland the man who pierces the nose for the nose-pin is equally shunned.

In many cases avoidance is obviously connected with the marriage regulations, but the question of its origin and meaning is highly complicated, and need not be discussed here.

CHAPTER XI

INITIATION CEREMONIES

Eastern and western types. Yuin rites. Knocking out of teeth. Victorian customs. Kurnai rites. Central Australian rites, circumcision, mica operation.

LIKE most peoples in the lower stages of culture, the Australian compels his young men and boys to pass through initiation ceremonies, sometimes through a series of them, extending from the age of eight or ten to the time when the man will reckon among the old men of the tribe; more often they are terminated at the age of twenty or so. We can distinguish three classes of ceremonies in Australia: firstly, the eastern and extreme western, characterised by knocking out of teeth and similar mild observances; secondly, a narrow area on the inside of these two regions, where circumcision prevails; thirdly, the great central area, where circumcision is only the preliminary to a severer operation known as mica, which will be found fully described in scientific works. These tribes, it may be noted, also practise the knocking out of teeth in addition to the other ceremonies. It is impossible to give anything like a full description of the ceremonies, which are the great event in the life of the Australian; for there are very numerous varieties even in the eastern area. Dr. Howitt, dealing with the south-eastern tribes alone,

devotes more than a hundred and thirty pages to the subject. Here, therefore, there will be no attempt at a systematic account; the most representative ceremonies will be summarised. They were known by various names, the best known being perhaps *bora*, used by the Kamilaroi; other terms were *Burbung*, *Dora*, *Jeraeil*, *Keebara*, etc.

An important function is played all over Australia and far beyond its limits by the little instrument known as the bull-roarer, which serves to warn the women and children that the sacred mysteries are being performed, for in most tribes it is death for a woman to see the initiation ceremonies or even the bull-roarer itself, which is sometimes called the grandfather, sometimes the voice of Daramulun or other god.

Initiation ceremonies are seldom peculiar to a tribe; there are, however, peculiar regulations in some cases as to the persons by whom the initiation shall be performed; a boy is not necessarily initiated, for example, by a person of his own class or phratry. The summons to the initiation ceremonies is issued by the tribal council and despatched by the hands of messengers. The preparations take several months, as a rule, and there may be more than one set of messengers.

Dr. Howitt was himself instrumental in procuring the performance of the *Bunan* in the south-east of New South Wales. The first step was to prepare the ground. A circular embankment was made in the middle of a clearing, and four hundred or five hundred yards from the mound a second clearing, so arranged

that the saplings could be arched over and make an enclosure with one opening facing the larger ground. About the time when the contingents from other tribes were expected to arrive, the first item was led off by a young man who had been initiated at the previous performance of the ceremonies. He pretended to see a snake in a log; taking a branch he ran off, the men following him in a long line, to each of the camps, thus warning the women what was going to happen. After various dances and songs the men go to the lesser Bunan, where they see figures made of earth, representing Daramulun, snakes, and other objects. This ceremonial was repeated at the arrival of each contingent, and might therefore take weeks. When all have arrived a fire was made in the great Bunan. The boys, under the guardianship of their kabos, *i.e.* brothers of the girls they will marry, were painted and then carried up the mound. Each held a woman's digging stick between his feet, on which hung a woman's bag, containing the opossum cord, man's kilt, forehead band, and nose-pin, that is, a man's full ceremonial dress, which is presented to the novice by one or more friends. The boys are then put near the fire, and the women after a time taken to a new camp several miles distant.

The ceremonies consist in serious dances and performances with comic interludes; their object is to impress the boy and show him that he has reached a turning-point in his career. According to Dr. Howitt, the serious portion is a dramatic representation of the cardinal sins, which are ironically recommended to the

boys for imitation; there are also symbolic acts, such as a movement of the hands on the part of the men and medicine-men to signify that magic power is passing from them to the boys.

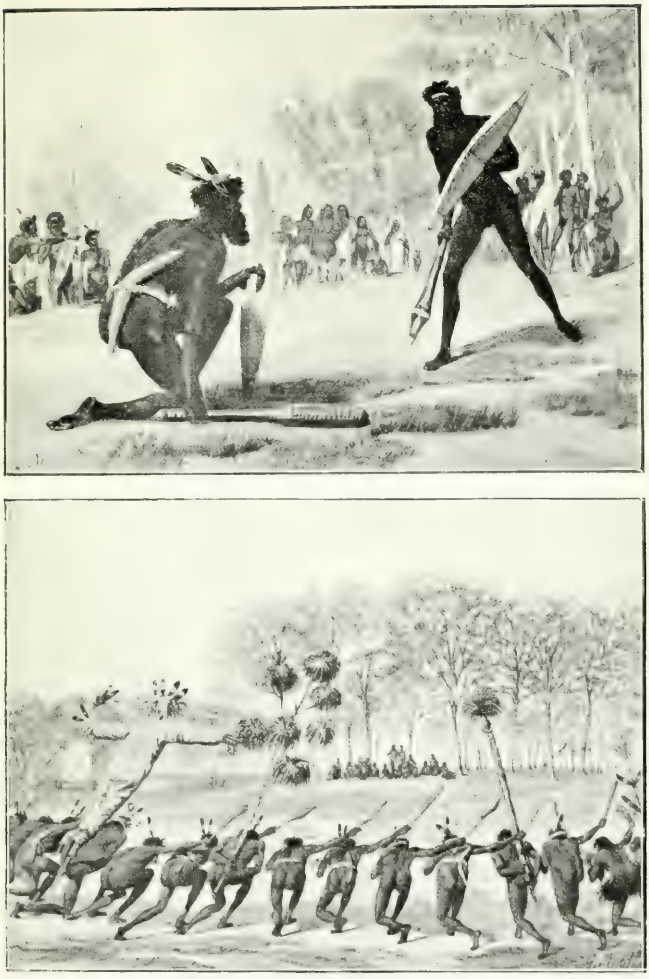
The next act was the preparation of a figure of Daramulun, the god, or demi-god, who is believed to preside over the ceremonies. Ten men were then dressed in ceremonial dress, stringy bark fibre wound round their legs and arms, the bands crossing one another, and wigs of the same material being placed on their heads; cords also drew back the upper and lower lips, completing the disguise. After some further dramatic representations a man, covered with charcoal as representative of Daramulun, emerged from some bushes: dancing all the time, he placed his lower incisor tooth to the upper incisor of one of the boys and forcibly pressed it upwards; then placing a stone chisel against the tooth, he struck a blow with his mallet; after some seven blows the tooth fell out, and it was given to one of the old men. The boys are instructed that they must show no sign of pain, and Dr. Howitt remarked that the one in question evinced no more sensibility than a stone; the only sign of suffering was an extraordinary quivering of the muscles of the legs. In another case, however, in which thirteen blows were necessary, the boy yelled, but his outcry was drowned by shouts from the men.

The next proceeding was to invest the boys with man's attire. Then followed more moral teaching mingled with comic interludes and mimetic dances, which went on all night.

On the next day a figure of Daramulun was dug in the ground and dances were performed round it, accompanied by explanations as to his nature and attributes. Next, one of the party pretended to be dead and was brought to life again. Finally, a lustration removed all signs of the ceremonial markings from the bodies of the novices and grown-up men. The party then started for the camp which had been prepared by the women. The novices did not enter into residence there, however; they had to pass through a period of probation in the bush; they receive their 'totem' name. During this period emu, kangaroo, and many animals are forbidden food, and the novice may not even see a woman. The 'totem' name originally carried with it the prohibition to eat the yunbeai, for by totem Dr. Howitt here clearly means the individual animal, not the hereditary totem, to which alone the name properly belongs.

The teeth are often carefully preserved; any rash use of them might have injurious consequences for the boy to whom it had belonged. Dr. Howitt carried off two of the teeth extracted at the ceremony just described, and some twelve months afterwards a messenger came two hundred and fifty miles to say that one of the boys was ill and to inquire what he had done with the tooth.

These ceremonies were subject to numberless variations according to the tribe which performed them. At Port Stephens the figure of Daramulun was represented by a pole with a long conical cap and a cross-piece as arms (cf. Pl. XXVIII.). The Wiradjuri figured



1. SINGLE COMBAT ; 2. INITIATION CEREMONY IN S.E. AUSTRALIA (p. 188)

(From Blandowski's *Australien*)

Daramulun as a being with only one leg; his figure was cut out in the ground. In the Kamilaroi tribe Baiame took the place of Daramulun; and in some cases Daramulun appears as his son.

Even among the eastern tribes the custom of knocking out teeth was not universal, and the initiation ceremony is found in a very simplified form only. The *Jibauk* rites of Victoria consisted in isolation of the boys, who were daubed with mud and had their hair cut so as to resemble a hog-mane, in a camp some two hundred or three hundred yards from the main camp. Each carried a bag slung round his neck in which was a live opossum caught with his own hands; if it died he had to replace it. His food he obtained by begging from the people in the camp; a good many foods were forbidden. He received no special instruction in tribal laws, for that had already been given by his father or uncle; from time to time he was made free of a forbidden food by receiving a piece from one of the old men. At the age of thirty or thirty-five he was free of the last restriction, that on eating emu.

The Kurnai ceremonies began with an episode intended to show that the men claimed the novices from their mothers. Then the novices were 'put to sleep.' During the whole of the following night the boys were forbidden to speak; they might only signify their wants by chirping like an emu-wren, and the attendant man had to find out what they needed by asking questions until he hit upon the right one. The next morning they are awaked as men, and the full male dress is put on them. Then follows the important

ceremony of 'showing the grandfather' or bull-roarer. Then the boys were 'given some frogs,' a cryptic way of referring to the *Dura*, a food-plant which grows in swamps. Next, they 'saw ghosts' and were made free of forbidden foods by eating them with initiated men. The conclusion of the whole has the 'water ceremony,' in which the youths splashed their mothers and the latter squirted water over them in return. As in other cases, the novices had then to undergo a period of abstinence in the bush.

The ceremonies of the central tribes may be dealt with more briefly. In the Dieri tribe a child, boy or girl, had his or her front teeth knocked out at the age of eight or somewhat later. They are extracted by wedging them tight with pieces of wood a foot long; then wallaby skin is placed against the tooth, and over that a chisel; the teeth to be extracted are the two lower front teeth. They are put inside a bunch of emu feathers anointed with fat, and kept for twelve months; if they were thrown away, the eagle-hawk would send big ones in their places which would turn up over the upper lip and cause death.

At the age of nine or ten a boy submits to circumcision and receives a new name from his father; although he inherits his *murdu* (totem) and phratry from his mother, his new name is inherited from his father. The next stage is *wilyaru*, the cutting of gashes, keloids, in the back. Immediately after this he receives a bull-roarer. The next stage is the rite of *kulpi*, or *mica*; finally comes the Mindari, which involves no mutilations, but is necessary before a man

can attend the tribal council. Similar ceremonies are practised from east of Lake Eyre to the north-west coast and westwards, the boundary running transversely from North-west Cape to east of King George's Sound.

CHAPTER XII

DISPOSAL OF DEAD. THE SOUL

Burial Customs, West Australia, Arunta. Exposure in tree. Divination of murderer. Ghost of dead. Burial cannibalism. Dieri burial customs. Adelaide tribe. Victoria. Corpse roasting and burning. Exposure in Queensland. Mourning customs. Hair of dead man. Widow. Future life, ghosts, land of dead, dreams. Idea of the soul in Queensland. Where the children come from. Arunta reincarnation.

THE burial customs of the aborigines are extremely varied, more than one method of disposing of the body being in use in a single tribe in some cases. In West Australia the grave was made in a north and south direction, and the face of the corpse was turned towards the east; the legs were doubled under the body so that the heels touched the thighs; the hair was cut off and a nail from the little finger of the right hand; the finger and thumb were tied together. White earth was smeared on the forehead; a fire was lit upon the grave, the ashes and smoke of which were feared by all. The spear and *wommera*, or spear-thrower, of the dead man were broken and a screen of boughs erected round the sepulchral mound; in front of it was a fire; on the surrounding trees were cut rings and notches.

Among the Arunta the body is buried very soon after death; it is placed in a sitting position, the face

looking towards the place from which the spirit of the deceased was believed to have come in the first instance. According to another account, the Arunta of the Finke River bury their dead in a grave at the bottom of which there is a little recess for the body on one side; the object of this is to prevent the corpse from being incommoded by the pressure of the earth. Wood and stones are removed from the neighbourhood of the grave, perhaps with the idea of preventing the spirit of the dead man from finding its way back to the camp; on the grave itself are thrown brushwood and bones, and water is sprinkled on it for the spirit of the dead man.

Further to the north burial in the earth is preceded by a longer or shorter sojourn in a tree, save in the case of the old women; the tribes say frankly that it is not worth while to trouble about them; we may therefore perhaps infer that the placing of the body in a tree is in some way a protection of the living, or to their advantage. When a young woman or a man or even a child dies, on the other hand, the body is placed in a tree on a platform of boughs; on the actual spot on which a man dies is placed a small mound and the camp removed from the neighbourhood. A day or two after death this mound is carefully examined to see if any animal or creeping thing has left its traces there; if any traces are found they infer from them the direction in which the murderer of the dead man lives. For it must be understood that death is not a natural phenomenon to the Australian native; even if a man has violated the tribal law, or suffered from disease, it is often believed that his death is due to the malefice

some hostile wizard. Accordingly they set themselves to find out where this wizard lives, as a preliminary to taking vengeance on him, or on one of his kinsmen, for in Australia it is immaterial whether the penalty for evil-doing falls on the malefactor himself or his innocent relatives.

After this search is over a visit is paid to the tree grave; here, too, there may be some signs of the murderer; perhaps his spirit is lurking around. Accordingly, with the idea of stalking the ghost of a living man, every precaution is taken; no opportunity of seeking cover on the way is neglected, and the surroundings of the tree are carefully scrutinised. Some days later the neighbourhood of the tree is again searched; and if a small beetle is found, it is seized. Then they say, 'Our eyes are made bright—now we know,' and promptly kill the unoffending beetle, in the belief that they are thereby killing the murderer. If no beetle is found, the matter is by no means at an end; some of the dead man's tribal or blood relatives go to the place and dislocate the bones of the dead man; then one of them binds some fur-string loosely round his legs and arms, and shutting his eyes, tumbles down from the tree. When he reaches the ground, he keeps his eyes shut and tells the others to run off as hard as they can; then tearing off the fur-string, he follows them; and they all sit down in the camp and fast for two days. In some way the water of which they deprive themselves is believed to injure the murderer; and the proof that it has done so is that they hear a voice in the distance, calling 'What is the matter with

me?' But for this they sometimes have to wait some time.

The spirit of the dead person is believed to hover about the tree; sometimes it visits the camp and is recognised by its strange, whistling voice. At intervals it is asked if the time has come for the body to be finally buried; when the proper opportunity has arrived, a few men go to the tree, cut a bark basket, and one of them rakes the bones out on to it; the skull is smashed into fragments. An anthill is then selected and the top of it taken off; into this the bones are put, with the exception of the thigh bone, which is wrapped round with fur string and made into a torpedo-shaped parcel. On the next day the *burumburu*, as it is called, is brought to the camp and received by some of the women, who wail at intervals. After some further ceremonies the bone is broken into fragments with a blow of an axe, and put into a pit, which is then covered with a stone. After this the spirit part of the dead person, which is said to be about the size of a grain of sand, goes to the place of spirits and remains there till it is time for it to be reincarnated. A curious feature of the belief in reincarnation is that the spirit becomes a male and a female alternately; perhaps this accounts for the even-handed justice that is meted out to men and women in the matter of burial rites.

Further to the north-east, on the Gulf of Carpentaria, the tribes eat the flesh of the dead man, and then, after some elaborate ceremonies, bury the bones. In the Binbinga tribe a fire is made in a hole in the ground, the head is cut off, the liver taken out, and the limbs

dismembered. No woman may take part in the cannibal feast. The bones are taken to the camp of the dead man's father, and he puts them in a parcel: a stout stick is placed upright in the ground, and in the fork of this the parcel is placed; a fire is lighted in a clear space round it, and in the smoke of this fire is supposed to be seen the spirit of the dead man. Only his father and mother may approach the fire. After a time the bones are placed in a log, and this in the boughs of a tree overhanging a water-hole, to be finally disposed of by a great flood or some similar catastrophe.

South of the Arunta are the Dieri. After a death they wail for hours at a time and smear their bodies with pipeclay. Tears course down the cheeks of the women, but when they are addressed the mourning stops as if by magic. As soon as the breath leaves the body of the sick man, the women and children leave the camp, the men pull down his hut so as to get at the body, and it is prepared for burial by being tied up. The great toes are fastened together, and the thumbs are secured behind the back; this they say is to prevent 'walking.' Eight men take the corpse on their heads, and the grave is filled, not with earth, but with wood, in order to keep the dingo at bay. The space round the grave is carefully swept, and the camp is moved from its original situation, so as to evade the attentions of the spirit if it should happen to get back to its old haunts. Mr. Gason, not a very reliable authority, says that the fat of the corpse is eaten; the mother eats of her children, the

children of their mother, brothers-in-law eat of sisters-in-law and *vice versâ*; but the father does not eat of his offspring, nor they of him.

Further south among the Adelaide tribe the body was placed on a bier and the spot on which it had rested was dug with the women's sticks; the little heap of earth was supposed to contain the wingka or breath, which they set free by loosening the soil. The bier was made of ten or twelve branches arranged like the hub of a wheel, and the bearers revolved rapidly round a man who supported the hub of the wheel on his head; when they came near a large tree they rested the bier against it, probably in order to allow the spirit of the dead man to pass into the tree; for in this tribe it was believed that the dead took up their abode in trees. It is interesting to note that among the Arunta Ilpirra of Finke River the souls of new-born infants are held to come from trees, which are probably those into which the spirit of a dead man has passed.

In the south of Victoria the dead are tied up for burial, but not in the same manner as among the Dieri. As soon as life is gone, the attendant, who has made his preparations before the eyes of the dying man, passes a cord of grass or fibre round the deceased's neck; the knees are then brought up to the breast, the elbows are made fast near the hips, and the hands raised and pressed against the chest; all the time the friends of the dead man carefully avoid contact with the corpse. The grass round the body is then burned and an axe put in the circle thus

cleared; with this the mourners aim blows at themselves in succession, but one is always at hand to see that they do themselves no serious injury. After performing divinatory ceremonies of the kind previously described, the friends of the dead man proceed to dig the grave. At the bottom of it is put a piece of bark which is strewn with soft leaves and twigs; more leaves are strewn on the top of the body, and another piece of bark is put on the top of them. Finally, a mound of earth is raised, the ground round it cleared, a fence erected, and a fire made at the eastern end. The spot is then deserted.

In the north of Victoria a thatched hut is erected on the grave, and on the Bogan River, New South Wales, they make regular cemeteries; in some parts it is the custom for the widow to put on her head a quantity of gypsum or kopi, which forms a regular skullcap; this is put upon the grave when the period of mourning is at an end.

The Encounter Bay tribe of South Australia subjected the corpse to a preliminary roasting; the knees were drawn up and the hands placed between the thighs. Under the combined heat of two fires and the sun, the skin soon peeled off, leaving the body white; this probably explains why the natives regarded Europeans as natives who had died and come back again. They inquired pertinently enough how the white man found his way to Australia, if he had not previously lived there as a black. The next process is to put the corpse over a fire and dry it, so that it can be carried about. After having been

transported from place to place by the relatives for several months, it is placed on a platform of sticks and left till completely decayed; finally, the skull is taken off and used as a drinking-vessel; after this the name of the deceased, which might not be mentioned, again comes into common use.

In the Ovens River district of Victoria the bodies of married people were burned, whether as a mark of attention or not is not clear. The body of a man who was killed by accident received special attention, probably because, like so many other people, the natives thought that his soul was likely to prove troublesome; his bones were placed in a hollow tree. The bodies of children were disposed of in the same manner, the hollow being cleared of rotten wood and lined with bark; the body was encased in a sort of bark coffin and a lid of bark placed over the hole in the branch.

In New South Wales the custom was to burn the bodies of the old and bury the young. On the Clarence River, so Angas tells us, a circle of stones was raised on the grave with an upright stone in the middle, and in other parts of New South Wales curious-looking stones, marked with scratches and of the shape of a banana, were put upon the graves, just above the head of the corpse; one sort is said to have been used for men, another for women.

East of the Fitzroy River the corpse of a woman was put in an open trench and left exposed; after a time the bones were collected by the relatives and placed in a hollow tree, thus reversing the rule of

the Central Australians. An old warrior receives more attention ; his body is put on a platform made of bark which rests on forked sticks. He is laid on his back with his knees up, just like the woman. For a long time the place is carefully avoided ; when he is quite shrivelled, the bones are taken away and put in a tree which is painted red or red and white. A common man is disposed of in the same way as a woman, and a child is put bodily into a tree.

South of the Gulf of Carpentaria the body is enclosed in a net and placed so that the head points to the north. The deceased's property is usually destroyed by fire ; more rarely it is distributed among his tribal brethren ; the children never get any of it. Here, too, the head is covered with kopi. When some one has committed a serious crime, he is often killed by the tribe acting collectively. In this case he is often compelled to dig his own grave.

In one part of Queensland a very curious custom is reported to exist, which seems to argue a very considerable amount of anatomical knowledge on the part of those who practise it, if, as seems to be the case, the object was to prevent the deceased from 'walking.' According to a report of the Queensland Museum, the knee-cap of the dead man was removed before the corpse was deposited in the grave. From another district is reported the custom of burying the dead head downwards ; this, too, may have been intended to make it difficult for them to return to their former abode.

In the Moreton Bay district the custom of removing

Kaitish Totemic Ceremony (p. 200)

the skin was found, and the reason given was that the virtues of the dead man descended to the possessor of the skin; in other cases the skins were used as charms to improve the catch in fishing.

Almost as varied as the methods of disposing of the body are the mourning customs which are practised by the Australian blacks. In Central Australia the men have to cut their thighs; how deeply they do so can be seen by reference to Plate XXIX. Similarly the women are obliged to cut open their heads; the scars of wounds thus inflicted transform the older women into most unsightly objects. Any woman who stood or might have stood to the deceased in the European relation of wife, sister, daughter, or mother-in-law, is compelled to observe silence till the period of mourning is ended; this lasts sometimes for two full years; and it may be imagined that the use of gesture-language is imperative under the circumstances. It is no uncommon thing to find the greater part of the women in a camp under a vow of silence; and yet the Australian native is supposed to have much to learn from the white man. So far does the education in gesture-language go that the women, even after the period of silence is over, sometimes prefer to hold their tongues.

A curious feature of Arunta mourning is that the hair of the dead man is cut off and given to a man standing to him in the relation of son-in-law; he has to go to a distant part of the tribe and challenge another man, standing in the same relation, to a duel. When they have fought, the hair is handed over by its first possessor, and then the new owner has to per-

form a similar ceremony; and so the fight goes on from group to group. During the period of mourning the name of the dead man is forbidden to many of his relatives, not, however, in the same degree. The explanation which they give for this custom is that they fear to disturb the ghost of the dead man; his *ulthaana* walks about and would hear them; he would then come to the conclusion that they were not mourning for him properly, and might trouble them in their sleep. In the case of the son-in-law, the restriction goes so far that, if he hears the name of the dead man mentioned by some one else, he must rattle his boomerangs together, so as not to hear what was said.

Not only may the widow not speak, she may not go about the ordinary avocations of life, until a period has elapsed after the death. If she went yam digging, and one of the younger brothers of her dead husband caught her, tribal custom would permit him to spear her on the spot. It is to one of these younger brothers that she eventually passes as a wife; in the early part of her mourning, on the other hand, she must avoid them. She never becomes the wife of an elder brother; and the elder brother is not permitted to punish any infraction of mourning customs. The first part of her mourning is terminated by some symbolical ceremonies. She gathers tubers and seed, showing that she can now begin to resume her old occupations, and she makes presents to the younger brothers of her late husband. The second period of mourning terminates with the 'trampling of the twigs on the grave.' She collects the small bones of various animals and makes

a sort of chaplet of them, fastening them on the hair head-rings worn by women. She then visits the grave with various relatives, and one of these chaplets is put on her head. The party next beat the air with their spear-throwers, probably in order to drive away the spirit of the dead man. The women join in the dance and shout; this is supposed to have the effect of driving the spirit into the grave. The men then proceed to jump upon it, with the idea of driving it down, and keeping it there. Then a hole is scratched in the top of the grave and the widow's chaplet, torn in pieces, deposited in it; finally the widow rubs the pipeclay off her body, and her mourning is at an end; she may, however, paint a narrow band of pipeclay on her forehead, as an intimation that she does not wish to find a new husband immediately. It is the custom for her to marry one of her late husband's tribal younger brothers; if she chance to be old, she may be passed on from hand to hand till she comes to a man who has so far been unsuccessful in securing a young and attractive lubra.

In South Australia the shaving of the head with a mussel-shell was one of the mourning customs imposed upon the men; the women removed their hair with the aid of a fire-stick. In Queensland a necklace of yellow reeds is found as a mark of mourning; and the mourners are forbidden to taste certain foods, such as eel. Near Rockhampton the women make white rings of chalk round their eyes. In South Australia is found, in addition to the shaving of the head, the custom of blackening the face with charcoal. Both the removal of the

hair and the face blackening seem to be intended to protect the mourner; he cannot be recognised under the coating of charcoal, and the hair no longer gives the spirit an opportunity of fastening on to the living man.

Many savage tribes can give a very detailed account of a future life; but the Australian does not seem to have been much concerned with eschatological problems. An exceptionally elaborate story has been got from the Wathi-Wathi on the Lower Murray. They say that the spirit starts for the sky when it leaves the body; another spirit gives it directions as to the road to be followed. There are two roads, one clean, the other dirty; the dirty one is the right one, for the other is only kept clean by bad spirits in the hope of tempting men to follow it. Then the *booki* meets a woman, who tries to seduce it; then two women with a skipping-rope, the woman on the clean side being blind. Then on both roads, for they run parallel, is a deep pit, from which flames rise, but a good spirit can clear it at a jump. Two old women take care of him. Then the god Thathapuli comes to try the *booki's* strength, and throws a *nulla-nulla* at a meteor, which is really an emu.

The tribes south of the Gulf have also some information on these matters. The spirit stays near the grave or comes to the camp; it goes up to the sky by the Southern Cross, which is a ladder, and reaches the Milky Way, along which it travels to Yalaing. There it finds plenty of game and water; but only the good spirits get clean water. On the way are two carpet-snakes, forty miles long; they live in the bark or on

the limbs of a tree, and dead blacks kill and eat them. At night spirits come and hold converse with doctors and medicine-men; they live in the bark of trees and carry hooked sticks. It will be observed that there is some uncertainty as to the future habitat of the soul, but this is not without a parallel in our own country, where the churchyard is peopled with ghosts. The Yerunthully hold that a rope is let down from the sky for a dead black to ascend by; when he gets to the top he lets it fall, and a meteor is seen.

Near Adelaide the soul was believed to go west at death, to a deep abyss, according to some; under the sea, according to others. When all are dead, the souls will return to the place of burial, and ask, 'Is this the body I lived in?' Here, too, we find a contradictory account of the lot of the soul, for the account goes on to say that it lives during the day in trees, and comes down at night to feed on caterpillars, frogs, etc.; it does not die again, but remains the size of a boy of eight. The southern Arunta send the soul to a place called *Alpara*, or *Laia*; there they eat, do no work, and live for ever. Another account says that it goes to the sky to the emu-footed *ulthaana* (spirit), who after a time throws them into the salt water, whence they are rescued by two lesser spirits; the latter also appear in the other account as guardians of the lake where the spirit lives.

The Port Lincoln blacks said that the soul was so small that it could pass through a chink; after death it went to an island and needed no more food; a redbill accompanied it on its journey. Collins says

that in New South Wales the blacks told him they came from the clouds and went back there, in size no bigger than a little child, after hovering for a time in the tops of the trees. But others believed that they turned into fish, porpoises or whales; in West Australia Salvado records that a small bird with a cheerful note was regarded as the form which a dead man assumed. Another West Australian idea was that their ancestors had come over the sea on the back of a turtle, and that the dead went back there in the same way.

The Dieri thought that the spirit of a dead man could visit a sleeper. The latter reported his dream to the medicine-man; if he decided that it was a vision and not a mere dream, he would order a fire to be lighted at the grave and food to be left there. They also believe that when any one dies his spirit goes up to Piriwilpa, the sky; it can, however, also roam about the earth.

It is, of course, a common belief that the spirit of the living man can also leave his body during sleep; the Wurunjerri held that the *murup* of the living man became a ghost at his death; during his lifetime it might be sent out of his body by evil magic. If a man were on a hunting expedition, and went to sleep at a distance from the camp, he might easily fall a victim to a medicine-man. The Wiradjuri believed that the ghost haunted the place where it had lived and took up its abode in some large tree. It might be seen sitting at the grave by those who had the faculty of seeing such things, says Dr. Howitt, that is to say, by medicine-men or by those who would grow up into

medicine-men. A ghost which took up its abode at the grave was believed to be able to injure strangers who incautiously came near; the grave was therefore avoided, and not by strangers only, in most tribes. In the Wellington valley the buggeen was said to be as big as a child; they avoided the hut erected on the grave because the buggeen would come up. Probably it was to the soul that an early missionary report refers, which says that the 'devil' was believed to sit on the newly made grave and eat the heart, liver, and kidneys. The souls of women were said to become plants.

There is a widespread belief among the natives that a dead black 'jumps up white fellow'; this is probably not to be understood in the sense that the dead black is actually believed to return, but that he is reincarnated in the white. It has been suggested that the custom of taking off the skin of the dead was the origin of this belief, for when the epidermis is removed the body appears white; but the belief is found where the custom does not exist, and in the north it is the Malay and not the white man who is regarded as the dead black. A more natural explanation is given by an answer once given to a white man who inquired why they thought he was So-and-So, mentioning a dead black; and got as his answer that if he had not been a black man once he would not have known the way to Australia.

Very few inquirers have attempted to penetrate deeply into the Australian ideas about the soul; one of them is Dr. Roth. He says that on the Tully River

the soul is associated both with the shadow and with the breath. It goes away during sleep, fainting fits, etc., and has 'no bones.' For some days after death it can be heard tapping on the tops of the huts, creaking the branches; the *koi* finally goes away into the solitudes of the scrub, where it can be met with everywhere; it is much more dangerous to solitary individuals than to a number together. An approved method of keeping the *koi* away is to keep up a good fire; at night blacks all over Australia will carry fire-sticks, and moonlight nights are regarded as less dangerous than others. Dr. Roth says that blacks believe the *koi* can be seen; and if the sight is shared by no other person, the human being pines away and dies.

On the Bloomfield River the *koi* is called *wau-wu*, but this only refers to a living person; at any rate, it does not include the ghost. At Cape Bedford the same term is used, but here it includes the ghost. The *wau-wu* is here often friendly; it will travel with a man and warn him of dangers. It visits its late owner's grave; when it ceases to do that, it goes eastward and enters a white man.

On the Pennefather River the ideas are more complicated. The *ngai* is connected with the heart; it has nothing to do with the breath (*wanji*), which leaves the body first. When the *ngai* leaves the body it passes into the children of the deceased, boys and girls equally; in fact they have no *ngai* until their father dies. On the other hand, the *choi* belongs to a person even before he is born; it goes wandering about in the

bush after his death for ever. It is sometimes seen, and can be heard and smelt: a dressing of carbolic put on a boy's arm by a missionary led the natives to suppose that the *choi* of his mother was there.

The blacks can tell you where a child gets its *choi* from. Anjea, a mythical being, makes the baby of mud and puts a bit of its father's *choi* in a boy; of its father's sister's *choi*, if it is a girl. These mud babies go wandering about the bush before they are born, so it sometimes happens that they catch their feet; then they are born club-footed.

This is only one of the ways in which children come into the world. On the Tully River the mother may have been sitting over the fire when a certain fish was being roasted, or she may have caught a kind of bull-frog, or she may dream of having a baby, or some one may tell her she is to have one—all these ways are equally effective. At Cape Grafton they have in the pigeon an Australian analogue of the stork in Germany; but it brings the baby in a dream, which the stork does not. At Cape Bedford the blacks believe that bush spirits make the babies; these spirits have long hair, big ears, and two sets of eyes, so that they can see before and behind. They make the babies in the west, where the sun goes down; the baby comes to its mother in the form of a plover, if it is a girl, or of a snake, if it is a boy; and when they hear the plover whistle, the natives say, 'Hello, there is a girl baby about.'

The Arunta give rather a different account of the matter; for they, or some of them, believe in re-

incarnation. When a woman goes near a place where the souls of dead blacks congregate, she runs a risk of getting a baby; and from the locality in which this occurs she infers the totem of the child. Singularly enough, the spirit children in the trees have a preference for a plump woman as a mother; in this their tastes agree with the Arunta ideas as to female beauty.

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGION

Definitions proposed. Mythical beings of Dieri and Arunta. Baiame. Combats with and of birds. Ætiological myths. Arunta religion. Baiame again. Daramulun. Nurrundere. Bunjil. Koen. The tikovina. Other gods and evil spirits. Spirits of dead feared. Totemism. Nagualism.

ALTHOUGH every one knows, or thinks he knows, what religion is, the fact remains that, anthropologically speaking, hardly anything like general agreement exists either as to the nature or the definition of religion. For Dr. Tylor it is the belief in spiritual beings; but many spiritual beings are not gods, and the mere belief in their existence does not constitute religion. Dr. Frazer holds that there is no religion without worship and propitiation, and consequently denies that the Australian has any religion. Dr. Durkheim and the French sociological school define religion as obligatory beliefs connected with obligatory acts; and for them the initiation ceremonies of Australia are religious, even when there is no 'All-Father' in connection with them, as is the case in the central area, at any rate in some cases. Another definition, recently proposed by Mr. Crawley, makes religion an emotion experienced in connection with

matters of life and death; for him, it appears, birth tabus and customs of mourning, which have for their object the preservation of life, must be religious; but in this use of the term he goes beyond what is commonly looked upon as religion. Fortunately we are not compelled to give a definition here, nor even to adopt one of those mentioned above. It will suffice to give some account of the mythical personages, sky beings and evil spirits, in which the Australians believe.

The Dieri tribe believes in mythical beings called Mura-muras, the ancestors of the present blacks; they still exist, and are said to be seen by medicine-men; they inhabit trees, which are for this reason held sacred. In olden time they virtually created man, forming him when he was in an inchoate state. Some of the Mura-mura legends account for the ceremonies of the Dieri, which were instituted, so they say, by these beings; others for their organisation. The totem animals were all swallowed by Mandra-mankana, a Mura-mura, who was killed and brought to life by a crow with a peck of its beak. The people had gone fishing; he followed them, and hid in the water; some got into his mouth, and with it fish and men; those who escaped ran in every direction, and each gave rise to a totem name. So it comes about that totem names are scattered all over the land, and are different in different parts.

To the north of the Dieri the Arunta have somewhat similar legends. In the Alcheringa times long ago lived their ancestors, who were at once animals and men, and gave rise to the present totems. Each living

Arunta is, as we have already seen, a reincarnation, in the belief of that part of the tribe investigated by Spencer and Gillen; one account makes them change their sex at each new birth. The Arunta of the southern area have a very different idea; they also believe in gods, which the Arunta of Spencer and Gillen do not, unless Twanjiraka may be called a god. They say he is only a bugbear, a creation of the men in order to keep the women and children in order; but the other portion of the tribe call him the good mountain spirit, and say he taught them to perform circumcision on their young men—an account which is far more consonant with other native ideas than that given by Spencer and Gillen.

Similar accounts of their origin were no doubt given by other tribes. In the Wellington valley Henderson found a tribe which believe in Baiame, of whom more will be said later. He created Mudgegong, according to Henderson, now an evil spirit, who tries to thwart Baiame; he destroyed the whole of the children of Baiame, turning them into wild animals, with the exception of two, who were the ancestors of the present inhabitants. Baiame is said to be in the north and asleep; but there is a tradition that he once awoke, and having turned on his side, there was a flood, and when he awakes again there will be a similar catastrophe. This is curiously like an Asiatic myth which will be found in the ninth volume of *Asiatic Researches*; but of course there is no reason for assuming the least connection between them.

In South Australia a story was told of the origin of

the Adjahdurrah; a giant was their ancestor; he had a brother who killed a man, made half of him into a bat, and sent the bat as a messenger to a race of people who refused to obey him; then they were burned to death and became sea-birds. The islands were made by the spider.

The Eucla have a tradition to the effect that a long time ago the blacks were very numerous; two large birds harried them, but a small tribe, consisting of three men and two women, attacked and killed the birds; two of the men went up to the sky, where they still dwell in the dark patches of the Milky Way. The remaining man and woman were attacked by a neighbouring tribe, who were unable to kill them, as they had a Cheshire-cat-like habit of vanishing and reappearing in some scrub or tree close at hand. Then they too went up to the Milky Way. During the initiation ceremonies the boys of the Eucla tribe have to keep their eyes fixed on the spots where these mythical beings are said to dwell.

The contest of birds with men or animals or other birds is a feature of many Australian myths. On the Murray, Eagle-hawk and Crow created all things; there was constant warfare between them; but at last they made peace, and agreed that the Murray blacks should be divided into two phratries—Eagle-hawk and Crow.

In Gippsland it was the mopoke, or 'more pork,' which had the quarrel with the eagle; the latter left an eaglet in charge of the mopoke, while he himself went hunting but the foster-mother sewed the nurseling up

in a bag and left him; so the eagle was wroth, and shut the mopoke up in a hollow tree, from which it only escaped by breaking its leg and using the bone to cut its way out. Then they made a solemn agreement that the eagle should have the right of going into the very highest boughs of the trees, so that he might see where the kangaroos were feeding; the mopoke was to be allowed to occupy the holes in trees; thus ended the dispute. It will be seen that many of these stories are what is termed ætiological, that is to say, they are told to explain some feature of the life of the blacks, or of animal life at the present day. In this the Australians do not differ from other savage races. Very often the explanation does not explain very much, but it seems to satisfy the teller of the story; for example, an early Darwinian hypothesis may be discerned in the myth, non-Australian, that once pigs were men and men were pigs; something knocked the pig on its forelegs, and ever since it has gone on all-fours, while men got up and went on two legs. All things are satisfactorily accounted for by this myth; but the teller of the story does not think it necessary to ask where the original pigs came from.

It has been mentioned above that the southern Arunta are said to have beliefs entirely different from those found by Spencer and Gillen among the northern portion of the same tribe. One account says that they have five gods, who preside over different species of animals. The tribal god is Malbanga; he has two wives; the Arunta are descended from them, as are

the people in the Wellington valley from the wives of Baiame. Another account, sent me by Mr. Strehlow, makes Altjirra the chief god; but this name seems to mean 'god,' and should not be taken as a proper name perhaps. He is said to live in the sky; the thunder is his voice; his feet are shaped like those of emus, and he ordained their festivals. Twanjiraka, however, the mountain spirit, is said to have ordained circumcision; the bull-roarer is said to be his voice. A third account by Mr. Gillen makes the name of the sky-being Ulthaana; he has a wife, and a child who never grows up; but Mr. Strehlow denies the latter point.

A god about whom there has been a certain amount of controversy in anthropological circles is Baiame, who has already been mentioned more than once. Dr. Tylor some twelve years ago put forward the view that he was not a real Australian deity, but a creation of the missionaries between 1830 and 1840. Now missionaries had, it is true, been in Australia early in the nineteenth century; but they were only temporarily in the Wellington valley before 1832, when a Church of England Mission was established there. But Henderson, whom we have already quoted, gives a long account of Baiame, or Piame, and the mysteries, or initiation ceremonies, of which he learnt particulars from a native in 1829, three years before these missionaries came to those parts. Dr. Tylor's view, therefore, is clearly untenable; we have no reason to suppose that these gods who preside over the initiation rites are anything but genuinely Australian.

Dr. Tylor's view was based to some extent on the fact that a later account of Baiame showed that he had markedly Christian characteristics, if the narrator, Mr. Manning, reproduces in his notes what he actually got from the natives. Dr. Howitt condenses Mr. Manning's narrative as follows : 'They believe in a supreme being called Boyma, who dwells in the north-east, in a heaven of beautiful appearance. He is represented as seated on a throne of transparent crystal, with beautiful pillars of crystal on each side. Grogorally is his son; he watches over the actions of mankind; he leads the souls of the dead to Boyma. The first man made by Boyma was called Moodgegally; he lives near the heaven of Boyma. He lives on the earth, and has the power of visiting Boyma, whose place he reaches by a winding path round a mountain, whence he ascends by a ladder or flight of steps. There he received laws from Baiame.'

This account is evidently strongly influenced by Christianity; but it must remain an open question whether it was not the Christianity of Mr. Manning, whose notes were 'mainly taken' from natives. It seems clear that Moodgegally is the Mudgegong of Henderson; if so, Manning seems to have distorted the name and confused the story, for in this account he seems to be a medicine-man, and not an enemy of Baiame's at all. Grogorally is in the same position as Daramulun in some tribes, and we need not assume that he is due to Christian influence.

Other accounts of Baiame tell us that he or his son sent a song for a ceremony performed in February or

March at intervals of two or three years; these were evidently the initiation ceremonies. The dead are said to go to him; and a flood story is told in connection with him, which must be that told by Henderson. A parallel to this is found in the myth recorded by Dr. Lang, who makes it relate to Buddai, whose name is pronounced Budjah in the Moreton Bay district. Baiame was said to live towards the east, to rule everything, and to be very good; he liked the blacks who were good but hurt nobody.

The Yuin held that Daramulun was the chief god. Dr. Howitt gives the following account of their views: 'Long ago Daramulun lived on earth with his mother Ngalalbal. Originally the earth was bare and like the sky, as hard as a stone, and the land extended far out where the sea now is. There were no men or women, but only animals, birds, and reptiles; he placed trees on the earth. After Kaboka, the thrush, had caused a great flood, which covered all the coast country, there were no people left, excepting some who crawled out of the water on to Mount Dromedary. Then Daramulun went up to the sky, where he lives and watches the actions of men. It was he who first made the Kuringal and the bull-roarer, the sound of which represents his voice. He told the Yuin what to do, and he gave them the laws which the old people have handed down from father to son to this time. He gives the Gommeras (medicine-men) the power to use the Joias and other magic. When a man dies, and his Tulugal goes away, it is Daramulun who meets it and takes care of it. It is a man's shadow that goes up to

Daramulun.' The Ngarigo tribe, which came to the initiation ceremonies of the Yuin, of course believed in Daramulun too. Dr. Howitt says that an old man told him that women knew of Daramulun's existence, but not his name; they called him Pabang (father); it was only when a young man was initiated that he learnt the name of Daramulun.

It is important to notice that the name of Daramulun was secret. This is just what we might expect if he were a genuine savage god and not a bugbear. The same thing happens among the Kurnai, but there the name in use is Mungan-ngaua (our father), which seems to be known to the men only. In fact, it is only in the last and most secret part of the initiation ceremonies that even this name is communicated to the novices. They are told, Dr. Howitt says, that he long ago lived on earth and taught the Kurnai of that time to make implements, nets, canoes, and weapons—in fact, everything they know. He also gave them the names they have from their ancestors. Mungan-ngaua had a son, Tundun, who married, and from him are descended the Kurnai, who term him Weintwin (father's father). Mungan-ngaua instituted the Jeraeil or initiation ceremonies, which were directed by Tundun; he made the bull-roarers, which are known by his name and that of his wife. Once the secrets of these ceremonies were impiously revealed to women. In his wrath Mangan-ngaua sent his fire, the Aurora australis, which filled the whole space from earth to sky. Men went mad with fear, and the sea rushed over the land. Those who survived became the Kurnai; the remainder

were turned into animals, birds, reptiles, and fishes; Tundun and his wife became porpoises.

In South Australia the Narrinyeri called their god Nurrundere, according to Taplin. He is said to have made all things on earth, to have given mankind the weapons of war and hunting, and to have instituted the rites and ceremonies which are practised by the aborigines, whether connected with life or death. Taplin also gives an account of a ceremony at a kangaroo hunt, which was said to have been prescribed by Nurrundere. A wallaby which had been killed on the road was produced, and a fire kindled by the women; then the men standing round struck up a sort of chant, at the same time stamping with their feet. The wallaby was put on the fire, and as the smoke from it ascended, the hunters, at a concerted signal, rushed towards it, lifting their weapons towards heaven.

This custom may have been an invocation of Nurrundere; if so, it was certainly a religious ceremony in Frazer's sense. In this connection it may be pointed out that Daramulun's name is called upon by the Yuin, and they dance round his figure in clay during the initiation ceremonies. It is difficult to see how the name of religion can be denied to rites of this description.

Over a great part of Victoria the name for the sky being was Bunjil, or Pundjel; the name denotes the eagle-hawk, but the god is conceived as an old black. He was often called some name, such as Mamingorak, which means 'Our father.'

At Lake Macquarie the blacks believed in a being called Koen, who is usually regarded as an evil spirit; but Dr. Howitt has pointed out that he corresponds exactly to Daramulun, Baiame, and other sky beings. Threlkeld, who conducted a mission in the twenties of the last century at Lake Macquarie, says of Koen: 'He is an imaginary male being, who has now, and always had, the appearance of a black; he resides in thick bushes or jungles; he is occasionally seen by day, but mostly at night. In general, he precedes the coming of natives from distant parts, when they assemble to celebrate certain of their ceremonies, as the knocking out of teeth in the mystic ring, or when they are performing some dance. He appears painted with pipeclay, and carries a fire-stick in his hand; but generally it is the doctors (a kind of magician) who alone perceive him, and to whom he says, "Fear not; come and talk." At other times he comes when the blacks are asleep, and takes them up as an eagle his prey, and carries them away for a time. The shout of the surrounding people often makes him drop his burden; otherwise he conveys them to his fireplace in the bush, where he deposits his load close to the fire. The person carried off tries to cry out but cannot, feeling almost choked; at daylight Koen disappears, and the black finds himself safely conveyed to his own fireside.'

Another mythical being at Lake Macquarie was Mailkun or Tippakalleun, the wife of Koen. Threlkeld says that she was a much more terrific being than her husband, whom the blacks do not dread, because

he does not kill them. She not only carries off natives in a large bag net beneath the earth, but spears children through the temple, and no one ever sees again those whom she gets hold of. Koyorowen is a male monster, who frequently alarms the blacks by his trill in the bush at nights. When he meets any one he orders them to exchange clubs with him; then, as the blacks do in their duels, the native takes first blow at his head; thereupon Koyorowen hits the native and kills him, skewers him with his club, carries him off, roasts him, and eats him.

Another name for this being was Yaho; he was said to live in the tops of the highest and rockiest mountains; he could turn his feet in any direction, no matter which way his path was, so they could never tell by his tracks which way he had really gone.

His wife is called Kurriwilban. She has a long horn on each shoulder pointing upwards; with this she pierces the natives, and then carries them into a valley, where she roasts and eats them. She does not kill the women, who are taken by her husband for himself.

Puttikan is a being like a horse, with a long mane and a tail as sharp as a cutlass; but he does not injure those who have been duly initiated by having their tooth knocked out.

It is probably no more than a curious coincidence that on the Herbert River in North Queensland the blacks believe in a being called Kohin. He is said to have his dwelling in the Milky Way; but at night he roams about on this earth in the form of a gigantic

warrior, according to the information received by Dr. Howitt, and kills those with whom he falls in. He can at will make himself invisible; he sends thunder and lightning, and the blacks talk to him during the storm, and spit and put their hands out towards the sky, as if to ward off the lightning. When the frogs are croaking, they are said to be calling on him to send rain. But he concerns himself with tribal morality too; for he is said to be offended if any one violates the regulations as to marriage, or eats forbidden food, or does not wear the mourning bracelet for the prescribed period. As a result of Kohin's anger the offender dies after a longer or shorter period. Once Kohin came down and appeared as a carpet-snake; he said that where he came from there was a good land, and in it a vast river full of splendid fish. He had two magic pieces of wood, called *tikovinas*, with him; these he presented to the tribe, and told them that if they were good men, they would be able to fly when they wore them. Two men tried to do so, and were able to fly from tree to tree like flying-squirrels; when they got more expert, from mountain to mountain. He then told them to prepare for a journey by filling two large bags with gum-tree leaves; when they were ready they were to start for the Milky Way and bring back confirmation of all that he had said. One came back, but the other knew when he was well off, and refused to leave such good quarters. While the two men were away, Kohin remained on the Herbert River and cured some old women of some sores, not to mention making them young again; when he went away, he left the two

tikovinas with the tribe, and said that when he sent another, marked red in the centre, they would all have to go to Kuling (the Milky Way) and live there.

The *tikovina*, it may be said, is a flat piece of wood cut from the North Queensland fig-tree; it is a foot long by four inches wide, and has on it the rude representation of a man's face with mouth and eyes. All over the front it is painted with red and black pigments made of human blood and clay, which divide it into lozenge-shaped compartments. It is used as a war charm, and hangs down a warrior's back to show that he means fighting, and to make his adversaries' weapons glance off him, while his own do not fail to reach their mark. It is kept hidden from the women and children, who seem to be afraid of it.

These are by no means the only gods known to Australian tribes; on the contrary, it can hardly be definitely asserted that there is or was any tribe which had not some such belief. The attributes of the being differ; in some cases observers seem to have confused evil spirits with good beings, as was the case with Koen. We may, of course, feel some doubt, where the moral attributes of the sky-being are very marked, as to whether we have not to do with Christian or, at any rate, white influence. Thus on the Victoria River, I learn from Captain Bradshaw, the tribe believes in a moral being called Aiambool, who punishes theft.

We have already seen that there has often been some confusion between evil spirits and other beings. The blacks have not made clear to European observers

the exact status of the beings in which they believe. Thus it may be doubted whether Mudgegong, of whom we learn from Henderson, is really an evil being; it is quite possible that he is the counterpart of Daramulun, for he is the embodiment of the eagle-hawk, which in Victoria gives its name to the chief god. We have seen that on the Herbert River there is a belief in a sky being, Kohin. Two hundred miles south of that river the blacks, according to Curr, believe in a good spirit or being, Boorala, who created all; to him they go when they die, if they have been good. Goin, the evil spirit, is an old man with claws like an eagle-hawk and feet like an alligator. Whether this Goin is the Kohin of Herbert River, as is suggested by their comparative nearness, geographically, or the Koin of New South Wales, must remain uncertain; if he is really an evil spirit in the Cape River tribe or not, it is difficult to account for the similarity of name on the hypothesis of coincidence; perhaps this is another case of misrecognition of a good being.

The evil counterpart of Koen was called Potoyan, according to Cunningham, who wrote in 1827. He gives the following account of these beings: 'They believe in a good spirit, whom they call Koyan, and in an evil spirit named Potoyan. The former is held to watch over and protect them from the machinations of the latter, and to assist in restoring the children which the other decoys to devour. They first propitiate Koyan by an offering of spears. . . . Potoyan strolls about after dark seeking for his prey, but is afraid to approach a fire. . . . Potoyan is provoked if you swing

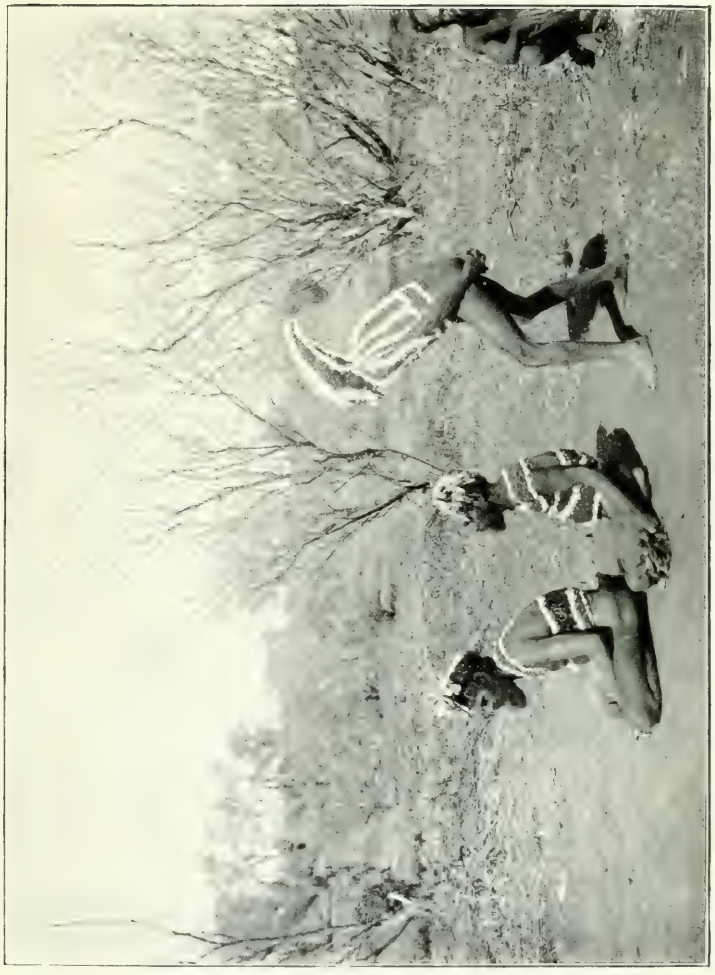
a fire-stick round . . . a low continuous whistle announces his approach.'

In South Australia, too, we find an evil spirit with a similar name to the sky beings of Herbert River and New South Wales. He is called Kuinyo, and is the embodiment of death. He makes his presence known by an unpleasant smell. His body is swollen, and he lies in wait in the scrub at night; when they hear his voice, it warns them not to let their fires out, for he appears only in the dark.

A curious story of the New South Wales belief is told by Thornton. He says they believe in an evil spirit called Boonbolong, a little man who prowls at night and is invulnerable. He says to a black whom he finds, 'Name your mother,' and if the black answers 'Boonbolong,' he is said to get off scot-free. This reminds one of the story of Rumpelstilzchen.

In many cases the evil spirit whom they feared was simply the spirit of a dead man, as we have already seen. In West Australia the hands were tied together, in part of Queensland the knee-caps were removed; there was a very general custom of tying up the corpse into a sitting position. Bearing in mind the Wellington belief that the dead might come up into the grave-hut, and the universal avoidance of mentioning the name of the dead, we may perhaps interpret these burial customs as intended to prevent the corpse from walking.

It is quite certain that many other burial customs have for their object the prevention of the return of the dead, and they may therefore be noticed here.



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One of the commonest is to clear a space round the grave and sweep it clean. This, like the strewing of ashes behind a funeral, is probably meant to obliterate the tracks, and thus prevent the dead from finding its way back. So, too, is the circuitous route adopted sometimes by the men who carry the body to the grave.

The subject of totemism has been mentioned in connection with the social organisation of the Australian tribe. But it has also a non-social side, which some students would term religious. We need not go into the question of terminology, but simply detail the facts. It has been shown that a tribe is divided up into a number of kins, each of which takes the name of an animal, rarely of some other object. In many tribes it is forbidden to kill one of these animals or in any way to do it harm. Occasionally the belief is found that the death of the animal involves that of a native of the kin which bears the animal's name. Omens are believed to be given by the totem animal.

Side by side with this belief exists one often brought into relation with it, and sometimes confused with it, that some one individual animal is in some way related to a human being, whether because it has been assigned to him by the medicine-men, or acquired in a dream, or in some other way. It is not hereditary. Like the totem, which may sometimes be eaten, but is more commonly prohibited food, the yunbeai, to use the Euahlayi name, may as a rule not be eaten; in fact, in the tribe in question, it is more important than the totem. Sometimes a big medicine-man will take the

form of his yunbeai in order to work mischief. Traces of this belief are found at various points in Australia, but it is uncertain whether it is widely distributed or not.

Among the Arunta, and some of the central tribes, there is a curious development of totemism ; the totem groups do magic for the totem to promote its increase, and even eat a small quantity of their own totem, contrary to the ordinary totemic rule to make it free to other people. The Intichiuma ceremonies, as they are termed, are long and complicated ; they are fully described in the works of Spencer and Gillen. How far they ever existed in other parts of Australia it is difficult to say ; there is no evidence of their having been practised in the south-east, but on the north-west coast similar rites seem to be known under the name of tarlo.

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CHAPTER XIV

MAGIC

Intichiuma ceremonies. Evil magic, pointing. Woman's magic. Hair in magic. Crystals. Kidney fat. Rain-making. Initiation of medicine-men. Queensland magic, dooming a person.

MAGIC is a term of which no satisfactory definition has yet been given. Under the general head, however, may be classed firstly a number of Central Australian ceremonies which can hardly be termed religious, inasmuch as they depend for their efficacy, it appears, rather on the supposition that nature moves by fixed laws than that personal beings and volition control its operations.

The Arunta tribe is split up into a number of local groups, each with a head man (Alatunja), and each is associated with some particular totem, which, as we have seen, is a species of animals or plants. One local group may be emu, another kangaroo, a third grass seed, and so on; they have to perform annually the Intichiuma ceremony of their particular totem, which has as its object the multiplication of the animal or plant, for the benefit of the rest of the tribe, who use it as food, the people who perform this particular Intichiuma ceremony having to abstain from the use of it, save in the performance of magical ceremonies.

The following is a brief account of the witchetty grub ceremonies of the Arunta in the words of the explorers who first called the attention of the scientific world to this remarkable tribe—Messrs. Spencer and Gillen. The men of the local group go to Emily Gap, a place 'specially associated with the Alcheringa ancestors of the group; on its walls are the sacred drawings characteristic of the totem. The Alatunja, who is in the lead, carries a small *pitchi* (bark vessel), and all the others have little twigs of the Udniringa bush, on which the grub feeds, in their hands. First of all they gather round a shallow cave in which is a large stone representing the maegwa, or adult animal, surrounded by smaller ones . . . which represent its eggs. After every one has struck the meagwa with his twigs, the Alatunja takes up one of the *churinga unchima* (the smaller stones) and hits each man with it on the stomach, saying, "You have eaten much food." Then after carefully examining other sacred spots in and about the gap, they march back to camp, following precisely the track said to have been followed by their Alcheringa ancestors. At intervals they stop at small holes in the hillside, where they deposited the stone *churinga uchaqua*, which represent the chrysalis state of the animal. Each man's stomach is hit with one of these, and, lastly, they halt within a mile or so of the camp, each man decorating himself with the *ilkinia*, or sacred design of his totem, head bands, hair strings, bunches of feathers, etc. While they have been away an old man, left behind for the purpose, has built a long narrow bush *wurley* (hut), called *umbana*, which

is supposed to represent the chrysalis case out of which the maegwa, or perfect insect, comes. Reaching this they all go inside and for some time sing of the insect in its various stages. Then they all shuffle out and in again, and are supplied with water and food.'

This is practically the end, for after singing all night by their umbana, they strip off their ornaments and hand them over to the other half of the tribe; for they themselves belong to one phratry. When the grub comes out, they go out daily and collect large supplies, of which the witchetty grub totem people eat a little; the rest goes to the other half of the tribe. After this the totem people may eat of the grub, but only very little, for otherwise they would be unable to perform the Intichiuma ceremonies properly.

Analogous ceremonies are found in the tribes lying north and north-east of the Arunta, and some of the ceremonies are shown in Pls. XXIX., XXX.; they are also found among the Urabunna, but the Alatunja there does not partake of his own totem animal, but only gives permission to others to eat it. There is reason to believe that similar ceremonies are practised north-westwards, perhaps as far as North-west Cape; but of this there is at present but meagre evidence.

As a rule, however, Australian magical ceremonies are not of this collective character; they are performed by individuals, singly or in combination, but those who unite are seldom bound by any tie such as forms the bond between those of the same totem. The Intichiuma ceremonies are entirely beneficent in their object; but the ordinary magic, though it may be curative or pro-

phylactic, or even actively beneficent in its object, as in the case of rain-making, is more often intended to compass the death of an enemy. It is, however, interesting to note that evil magic may be wrought by any one, including the medicine-man or magician ; curative magic, on the other hand, is the special function of the magician, who *qua* magician is seldom provided with means of inflicting harm. An exception is found in some of the Gulf tribes investigated by Dr. Roth.

One of the most ordinary methods of doing a man to death in Australia, or of inflicting on him serious injury, is known as 'pointing.' In the Arunta tribe are employed for this purpose short pieces of stick or bones, one end of which is sharpened ; they may have a piece of gum on the other end, or be decorated with down, or have designs burned upon them ; that is immaterial. When a man wishes to 'point' his enemy, he goes away to some lonely spot, and crouching down over his stick or bone, he repeats a curse : 'May your heart be rent asunder' ; or 'May your head and throat be split open.' This done he returns to the camp, leaving his bone stuck in the ground ; some time afterwards he brings it back to the camp and hides it. Then one evening he goes out and gets it, then creeps up till he can see his victim's features by the light of the camp fire, stoops down, and turns his back towards the camp. He then takes the *irna* or bone in both hands and jerks it repeatedly over his shoulder, repeating his curses as he does so. The evil magic then goes straight to the victim, who sickens and dies without apparent cause, unless some medicine-man can remove

the cause of the sickness. Another form of pointing apparatus consists of a long strand of human hair string, to one end of which five small pointing bones are attached; to the other end one bone and a pair of eagle-hawk claws. It takes two men to manage this. They kneel down, the front man holding the five bones, and point and jerk it in the direction of the intended victim; then a little dust is pushed up to the height of an inch or two before the first man; this is to prevent the victim from dreaming of the Alcheringa camp of the pointer's mother, which would give him a clue to the person who had done evil magic for him. This kind of magic is said to be excessively powerful; for, of course, the eagle-hawk's claws grip the internal organs of the victim and cause severe pain.

A pointing bone may have awkward results for other than those for whom its magic is intended. Professor Baldwin Spencer got a man to show him how the bone was pointed, and unluckily it was not his own bone which he used, and some of the magic came back and affected him severely; fortunately Professor Spencer had a medicine-chest with him, and the afflicted individual gradually recovered his equanimity. If he had made the stick himself, its magic would, of course, not have harmed him.

Pointings are practised only by men; but women have their own kinds of magic. If she desires to injure a man, she blows on her fingers and then claws the air, moving her hand up and down with little jerks as the victim leaves the camp. After this he gradually wastes

away; but, of course, she takes good care that no one sees her at her magical arts. To injure another woman, perhaps an older wife of her husband, she uses yam-stick magic. Taking the stick out in the bush, she sings over it and makes motions with it as if she were pulling something towards her. Then she leaves it in some out-of-the-way spot, and the older woman gradually pines away. If she wishes at any time to effect a cure, she brings fat and red ochre and her yam-stick; she then rubs them on her victim, as if to draw the evil magic back. A very effective object for private curative magic in these tribes is a wife's head-ring. The husband wears it on his head to cure head-ache; if he has overeaten himself its application to the proper quarter is equally effective.

The custom of betrothing girls at a very early age is responsible for a species of magic practised in the Warramunga tribe, which has as its object to make the girl grow.

There are many magical practices connected with the hair of the dead, the object of which is to transfer to the living the attributes of the dead man. Sometimes a betrothed girl gives her hair to her future husband, who has then, if she proves unfaithful, a means of inflicting magical punishment on her, but this form is not found in the Arunta tribe, for the simple reason that everybody has a lock of some one else's hair, which would make it too simple to work magic on the original owner. The Arunta have therefore barred this kind of magic; at any rate they do not practise it.

Dr. Howitt describes the pointing practices of the south-eastern tribes, and of some of those who live south of the Arunta. Among the Dieri the bone is usually a human fibula; two persons generally join in pointing the bone.

It appears that in this tribe the medicine-man also works evil as well as curative magic as a part of his medicine-man's work. If some one has fallen ill, his wife will go to the suspected medicine-man and make him a small present; then he knows that he is suspected, and, fearing revenge, probably promises to withdraw all power from the bone by steeping it in water.

Among the Wiradjuri some of the medicine-men use a small piece of wood shaped like a bull-roarer. This they place close to the fire, pointing towards the intended victim; it gets hot and springs into its victim without being seen. Another way of working evil magic is by taking a piece of a man's clothing and wrapping a piece of a dead man's fat up in it, and then putting it in front of a fire.

Among the Wotjoballuk a small spindle-shaped piece of wood, called *guliwil*, was roasted at intervals; it was marked with a rude effigy of the victim, and of some poisonous snake. On the Lower Murray an effigy was cut on the ground; over this was chanted a song in which the *makthai*, or real name of the victim, was used; by this means they expected to bring his spirit to them. This done they would place him under a spell from which he could not escape.

Bones were not the only things used; almost equally

important in some parts are quartz crystals; these a medicine-man was believed to project invisibly or in the shape of a small whirlwind, a foot high. They entered the body of the victim, who fell ill and died unless the medicine-man of his tribe could extract the crystal from his body, which he often pretended to do.

Human fat, especially that round the kidneys, is all over Australia reputed for its magic virtue. Magicians are said to have the power of taking it either by magic or by violence and magic combined. The Wiimbaio say that they garrotte a man with a net of peculiar construction. Among the Wurunjerri they are said to use a strangling cord, an instrument made of the sinews of a kangaroo's tail and the fibula of the same animal (Pl. XXXII.). The assailant creeps into the camp, and puts his hand on the head of the victims; if it is cool, the time is favourable; if not, he waits. Then the cord is put round his neck and the bone threaded through the loop at the end, and the whole pulled tight. Another cord is passed round his legs, and the victim is carried off; then he is cut open and the fat extracted. When he comes to himself he thinks he has had a bad dream; but if the fat thus obtained is heated over the fire, he dies in a day or two; otherwise he may linger on for some time.

An important branch of magic was rain-making. This was sometimes a simple process of mimetic magic, in which the rain was represented by water squirted from the rain-maker's mouth, or shaken from a lock of his hair; sometimes the performance was more dramatic; among the Dieri two magicians, who

STRANGLING CORD (p. 236)

are supposed to have received an inspiration from the rain-making Mura-muras (ancestors), are bled; then the old men are bled, while the two kunkis—as the magicians are termed—throw handfuls of down into the air; the blood is allowed to flow upon the men sitting round. Two large stones in the middle of the hut represent rain-clouds; the down also symbolises the clouds, while the blood is, of course, the rain. Then the two stones are placed in the highest tree in the neighbourhood, and the other men throw gypsum into a water-hole. The Mura-muras are supposed to see this and send rain: but if it does not come, the matter is very easily explained; the Mura-muras are angry, or some other tribe has intervened to prevent their magic from taking effect.

In the central tribes a man becomes a medicine-man, according to the idea of the natives, by having certain stones or other objects put in his body by spirits. In Central Queensland the spirits also give them special pointing sticks. An old medicine-man told Spencer and Gillen how he was initiated; he said that a very old medicine-man came and threw some of his atnongara stones at him with a spear-thrower; some hit him on the chest, others went right through his head from ear to ear, killing him. The old man then cut out all his insides, heart, liver, lungs, everything, and left him lying on the ground; next morning he put some more stones into him, and covered his face with leaves. Then he sang over him till his body was all swollen up. Finally he fitted him out with a set of new clothes and patted him on the head, whereat

he jumped up a medicine-man. He had forgotten all about his past life, and had to be told which his wife was, and so on ; this proved him to be a medicine-man.

There are several things which a medicine-man may not do under penalty of losing his powers ; he must not eat too much fat, nor allow a big ant to bite him ; for if he did, the stones would leave his body. In the same way he must not drink anything hot ; not long ago a cup of tea caused the powers of one medicine-man to leave him for ever.

Among the Warramunga the medicine-men say that they have a snake put into their heads. In the Binbinga tribe, spirits are supposed to take them up to the sky ; and in the Mara tribe they even know how to get a passage there, for they must make a fire of emu, lizard, etc., fat, which attracts the attenion of two spirits. It is interesting to note that in the Anula tribe a woman can have the same magical powers as a man. But her powers do not seem to consist in the withdrawing of evil magic ; she gives bones. Incantations are used against evil magic, or, in a very bad case, the help of some well-known consulting practitioner from a neighbouring tribe is called in.

In the south-eastern tribes the making of medicine-men was performed in many different ways. In the Tongaranka tribe a man succeeded his father. The Wiimbaio consumed part of the body of a dead man. In South Australia the medicine-man had once at least to eat part of a child's body. For the Wotjoballuk the process consisted in the insertion of crystals in his body. Other tribes believed that the

medicine-man fell into a trance of two or three days' duration, during which he was perhaps carried up to heaven. The Wolgal thought he derived his powers directly from Daramulun; and the Port Jackson tribe medicine-men underwent initiation by sleeping on the grave of a dead man, who took their insides out in the orthodox way.

The Wiradjuri beliefs are of sufficient interest to warrant a longer account. Dr. Howitt was told by one of their medicine-men that at an early age he was taken by his father into the bush, and two quartz crystals put against his breast, which eventually vanished. Then at the age of ten he was taken to the initiation ceremonies; when his tooth was knocked out, his father took him into the bush and showed him a crystal. When he looked at it, his father went down into the ground and came up covered with red dust. Next he saw a dead man lying in a hole in the ground, who rubbed him all over. As they came out, his father showed him a tiger snake which was to be his *budjan* (familiar).

With the aid of the snake he went through several tree trunks, and finally saw a lot of little Daramuluns, sons of Baiame. Then he and his father got astride threads and went up to the clouds through a place that was always opening and shutting. His father told him that if this touched a medicine-man, it would hurt his spirit, and he would sicken and die. Then he saw Baiame, who was an old man with a long beard. He sat with his legs under him, and from his shoulders extended two great quartz crystals to the sky above

him. It will be noticed that in some points this throws light on the crystal throne talked of by Mr. Manning, to which allusion has been made in the chapter on gods. There can be little doubt that the narrative told to Dr. Howitt was perfectly *bonâ fide*.

It is interesting to compare these experiences with those of religious persons, whose visions have been studied by Professor James in varieties of religious emotion. There is no direct evidence of hypnotic influence at initiation ceremonies, but it is certain that the boys would be in an extremely suggestible state; and the narrative summarised above makes it probable that suggestion plays a great part in the initiation rites of medicine-men. It is peculiarly interesting that ill-health seems to diminish their powers, which are certainly not entirely fictitious, in so far as they are connected with trance phenomena and similar states; the same loss of power has been observed in the case of whites with abnormal powers, as soon as they fell into ill-health.

Among the Kurnai the Birraark resembled in many respects a spiritualistic medium. He was supposed to be initiated by the Mrarts or ghosts; they take him to the sky and teach him songs and dances; he can return there at will. He, too, had his tabus; he might not eat any part of a kangaroo that had blood on it, nor carry home a kangaroo that he had killed; nor yet might he kill any man. It is difficult to see how these deeds, harmless or harmful, could affect such powers as the Birraark really seems to have possessed, that is, of course, apart from auto-suggestion. It is

interesting to remark the parallel between many of these savage tabus and those of the Flamen dialis at Rome.

The Birraarks were said to learn about absent friends in the most approved mediumistic style. They were also useful members of the tribe, for they were said to know when a whale had been stranded. In some of the dark séances of the Birraarks, voices were heard, which were said to be those of the ghosts, and at the end of the performance the medicine-man was found in the top of an apparently inaccessible tree, fast asleep.

In North Queensland medicine-men starve themselves for three or four days, practise, in fact, the ordinary initiation fast, and then they see a spirit named Malkari, who will put small pebbles, crystals, or other objects in them. Other doctors obtain their powers through the instrumentality of Karnmari, a nature spirit in the form of a water-snake. When he is fishing, Karnmari will point at him a *mangani*, or death charm, but he will not recognise what has taken place. Towards night, however, he sees Karnmari undulating along beneath the surface of the water. The next day he is ill, and some four or five days later a medicine-man attends him, and extracts the bone or crystal which is causing the illness ; then he is a medicine-man himself. The ghost of a dead man can also initiate a man, as in New South Wales. In the Cloncurry district a man has to go through a good deal before he can graduate as a medicine-man. He goes some days' journey down the Diamantina, where

he selects a teacher and makes him a present; then he is put to death and thrown into a water-hole for three or four days. The next process is to take him out and smoke his body till it is quite dry; he is then shown how to use the *mangani.*

There are various ways of 'dooming' a person besides using the *mangani.* Chants and dirges may put a curse upon him; or a man may spit at another and cause him to waste away. On the Bloomfield River he may be buried in effigy, or his portrait painted on a bull-roarer. You may kill a man by imitating the action of cutting his throat with a pearl shell, or you may burn his hair or touch him or his food with a charm. Besides the ordinary method of the death bone, you can bury it where a man is going to sleep; or you may put a rope into him at night just below Adam's apple; it is invisible to all except the medicine-man. He can remove it, and generally burns it, but takes care that he is alone when he does so.

CHAPTER XV

MYTHS AND TALES

Deluge. Bunyip, Mindi. Origin of death. Origin of man. Origin of fire. Origin of the sun.

THE Australian native has not so rich a mythology as the Red Indian, but he has none the less many stories and myths, possibly more than is apparent from the scientific works which deal with him, for they are more concerned with ceremonies and organisation than with stories.

Legends of a deluge are as common in Australia as they are in many other parts of the world. The natives of Lake Tyers tell of a time when there was no water to be found on the earth, and all the animals met in council to discover the cause of this extraordinary drought. At last they discovered that a gigantic frog had swallowed all the water, and would only disgorge it if he were made to laugh. So they set themselves to amuse him, and various animals danced and capered in front of him, but to no purpose; he remained just as stupid and impassive as any ordinary frog. At last the eel began to wriggle and distort itself, and this was too much for the frog's gravity; his jaws opened, out rushed the waters, and a great flood overspread the land. Many perished in the waters, but the pelican,

who was a black before the flood, set himself to save the blacks. He made a great canoe, and sailed among the islands which here and there appeared amid the great waters. When he found any one he took them on board. But presently he had a quarrel with them about a woman. By some means or other the pelican was turned into a stone.

The blacks believe in the existence of various fabulous animals. In the south of Victoria they told stories of a creature called the Bunyip, which Buckley says appeared to be about the size of a full-grown calf, whatever that may be; it was only seen when the weather was very calm. It is said to bellow loudly and to live in the mud at the bottom of water-holes. At various times Europeans have described animals, which they asserted to be unknown to science; but if there was ever any substantial foundation for stories of the Bunyip, which was said to eat human beings or to draw them down, mermaid fashion, till they were drowned, it is probably to be sought in a distorted idea of the seal.

In the Melbourne district the natives believed in a great snake, which they termed Mindi; he sends diseases on the blacks and has a family of little Mindis, whom he sends out to do his behests. The scars of smallpox, or of the native disease which was mistaken for it by Europeans, were termed Mindi's scales, according to one authority, and the disease itself Mindi's dust. Only one native was believed to have any power over Mindi, and he was the only one who ever set foot in the territory occupied by Mindi. Once

a man of his tribe was imprisoned in Melbourne for cattle-stealing, and the natives fully expected his fellow-tribesman to let loose Mindi on Europeans and blacks alike.

There are many savage peoples who do not regard death as a natural occurrence, and the Australians are among them. More than one story is told to explain the origin of death. In West Australia they said that when man first began to exist there were two beings, male and female, named Walleyneup and Doronop. They had a son named Bindirwoor, who received a deadly wound, which they carefully endeavoured to heal, but without success, whereupon it was declared by Wallyneup that all who came after him should die in like manner. He did not remain in the grave, but arose and went to the west, to the unknown land of spirits across the sea. The parents followed after their son, but were unable to prevail upon him to return, so they have remained with him ever since.

According to a Queensland story, death came into the world because some bats were driven out of a tree.

The Victorian blacks could give an account of the creation of man. One day Punjil cut with his large knife two pieces of bark ; then he mixed a quantity of clay and made two black men—one very black and the other not quite black—and he took from morning till night over making them. He began at the feet, then he made the legs, and so on to the head ; and on the head of the one he put curly hair and named him Kookinberrook, and on the head of the other he put smooth hair and

named him Berrookborn. Then he was pleased, and blew in their mouths and nostrils, and the two men began to move. They were young men, not children. Punjil had a brother named Pallian, and next day Pallian was in a creek paddling and beating the water. After some time the water got very thick, and he plucked a small bough from a tree and looked at the water through it. As he did so he said, 'Name you.' Presently he saw two heads, then two breasts appeared, and at last there were two women before him. Then he carried them to Punjil, who breathed into them as before and gave them names, to the one Kunewarra, to the other Kuurrook. They gave each man a wife, and put a spear in each man's hand, and in the women's hands they put the digging stick. Then Punjil and his brother and daughter went out with them and showed the men how to hunt kangaroos and emus, and the women how to get gum and roots and bandicoots. The blacks say that this all took place far away to the north-west; this may be due to a recollection of a recent immigration into Victoria.

The blacks have many legends of the origin of fire. The Booandik tribe told the following: The blacks lived without fire to prepare their food with; they knew of its existence, but Mar (cockatoo) away to the east kept it to himself, hiding it under the crest of feathers on his head. As he was powerful, it was useless to try to take it from him by force, so they arranged a corroboree. At the hunt preceding it a kangaroo was killed, and a choice bit was offered to Mar, who, however, refused it; but when he was offered the skin, he

accepted it. He took it away to his camp, and an active little fellow named Prite followed him through the grass, so that he was not detected in his spying. He watched patiently, and at last Mar put his hand to his head and took the fire out. Then he went back and told the others, and Tatkanna (robin) undertook to go and find out more; so he went quite close and got his breast scorched by the fire, and that is why he has a red breast. But he managed to get hold of a fire-stick, as Mar was just singeing the hair off the skin, and carried it off, setting fire to the long grass. Mar tried to beat it out, but in vain; then, grasping his waddies, he rushed off to where the others were encamped, and seeing Tatkanna's red breast, knew that he was the culprit. He challenged him to fight, but Takanna was a little fellow and began to cry. Then Quartang (laughing jackass) took up his quarrel; but he soon had enough, and flew up in the trees, where he remains.

Other legends deal with the origin of the sun. In the olden time, before the sun's rays lightened this earth, birds and beasts quarrelled continually, and the native companion was at the bottom of most of the disagreements. In those days the emu lived in the clouds, and had immensely long wings; occasionally she caught sight of the earth, and the sight gave her much food for thought. The native companions interested her most with their dancing; and finally she came down amongst them, folded her wings, and explained that she wished to learn dancing. An old courtenie (native companion) replied that she could

never learn singing or dancing so long as her wings remained long; at the same time she gave a signal to the other courtenies, who, unobserved, folded their wings over their backs, so as to appear wingless. So the foolish kurwie (emu) allowed her wings to be cut off; and then the courtenies, spreading their wings, flew off, laughing at her folly; and the laughing jackass, which till then had been mute, burst out into a guffaw at the idea of any one being so stupid.

This was not the only scurvy trick which the courtenie served the kurwie. One day when the latter had a big brood, the courtenie saw her coming along, and hid her own chicks with the exception of one. Then she went up to the kurwie and commiserated her on having so large a family, and advised her to kill them before she died of overwork. So the kurwie, who had not learnt wisdom by misfortune, set to work to destroy her brood; and as soon as she had done so, the courtenie called 'Geralka beralka,' and out came her own chicks. But this time the courtenie suffered for her misdeeds; her long neck, which had charmed all beholders by its grace, got crooked, and her voice lost its compass, and she was left with two discordant notes only.

Next season, when the kurwie was sitting on a fresh clutch, the courtenie came up, pretending to be very friendly. This was more than the kurwie could stand, and she made a rush for her. The courtenie hopped over the kurwie's back and made for her nest, where she broke all the eggs but one; then the kurwie made for her again, mad with outraged maternal love; but

she was just as unsuccessful, and the courtenie, taking the remaining egg in her claw, sent it whirling up into the sky. There it hit a great pile of wood, collected by a sky-being, Ngoudenout, and the whole burst into flames, flooding the earth with light. This so alarmed the two birds that they composed their quarrel and have ever since lived in perfect amity.

Ngoudenout saw what an advantage it would be to the world to have the sun; so ever since he has lit the fire again every day. That this is so is clear from the fact that in the morning, before it is well kindled, the sun gives little warmth; and in the evening, when the wood pile is burnt out, it gets cold again. The period of darkness is employed by Ngoudenout in collecting wood for the next day's fire.

Curiously enough, this same story, which is told in various forms in Victoria, reappears hundreds of miles away in New South Wales; but here the bustard and the emu are the chief actors; and the little bustards are done to death by their mother.

Dinewan, the emu, was the largest bird, and acknowledged as ruler by the feathered race. Goomblegubbon, the bustard, was jealous, and debated how she could do Dinewan an injury. So she persuaded her that the ruler of the birds should have no wings; at the same time she warned Dinewan that she had no wings herself, and would rule the birds in her place, if she were not careful. So Dinewan cut off her wings with a stone axe, and Goomblegubbon jumped up, dancing with glee, at the success of her stratagem.

Dinewan brooded over her wrongs, and decided to

hide all her young ones but two. Then she went up to Goomblegubbon, and asked her why she reared such a large brood, for the food that just sufficed for twelve little birds would make giants of a brood of two. So Goomblegubbon walked away, wondering whether the size of the Dinewans really had anything to do with the number of the brood. At last she decided to kill all her own little ones but two, and sought out Dinewan to tell her. Then Dinewan called her twelve chicks, and said that the loss of her children was a fitting punishment for the Goomblegubbon's trickery and deceit in the matter of the wings.

And ever since then the emus have had no wings, and the bustards have laid only two eggs.

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